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\*WPD201 09/19/2006

U.S. Urges Iran To Halt Nuclear Program, Resume Negotiations

(International community remains united on threat of sanctions, officials say) (1050)

By David Shelby

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The United States is prepared to enter into diplomatic discussions with Iran for the first time since the 1979 hostage crisis at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran if Iran verifiably suspends its uranium enrichment activities.

"We have said that if Iran is prepared to suspend [uranium enrichment], we are prepared for the first time in decades to sit down across the table from the Iranians and talk about ending their nuclear ambitions and providing a path for Iran's entry into the international system," Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in a media interview in New York September 19. "I would meet anywhere with my counterpart at any time once Iran has suspended its enrichment and reprocessing activities."

Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns underscored the importance of this historic offer during September 19 testimony before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Washington.

"No prior administration, Republican or Democrat, had made that offer in 27 years," he said. "We're willing to do it on the nuclear issue because we see the nuclear issue as uniquely dangerous to our country and to our allies in the Middle East."

Burns invoked a baseball metaphor to explain to the senators that discussions between Iran and the international community have moved into "extra innings" [the procedure used to break a tie] since the August 31 expiration of the U.N. Security Council's deadline for Iran to halt its nuclear program. He said he expects Iran's chief nuclear negotiator, Ali Larijani, to attend the proceedings of the U.N. General

Assembly in New York this week and meet with European leaders who are trying to convince Iran to pursue the path of negotiations.

"So the Iranians have a clear choice to make. That choice is in New York this week," he said. "And we very much hope that Iran will make the right choice so that negotiations can proceed and diplomacy can proceed."

"But should that not be the case -- and since we're in extra innings, we can't wait forever, and there's a very short time line here -- then President Bush and Secretary Rice as recently as this morning said publicly that we will seek to impose a sanctions regime on the Iranian government," he said.

The Security Council adopted Resolution 1696 on July 31 demanding that Iran suspend its uranium enrichment by August 31 or face the possibility of economic and diplomatic sanctions. Burns said that the resolution commits those governments that voted for it "to a course of sanctions under Article 41, Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter, should Iran not meet this basic condition. ... And so we assume and we believe that all the governments that voted for that resolution back on July 31 will honor it." He said that moving ahead with a sanctions resolution at this time is a matter of credibility for the Security Council.

Burns explained that the sanctions would be graduated with the first phase focusing on the Iranian leadership and on dual-use exports that Iran might use to advance its nuclear program. "We believe we have unity among the Perm Five countries and Germany to do this. And as recently as yesterday afternoon, that unity was in place," he said. The "Perm Five" countries, the five permanent members of the Security Council, are China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States. Germany also has been deeply engaged in discussions about the Iranian nuclear program.

Burns said that the coalition of countries dealing with Iran is operating from diverse positions but remains unified on the key issues. "It's a coalition of countries with sometimes different interests. I can't say that Russia and China see the Iranian nuclear issue exactly as we do, but we held together at the key junctures over the last 12 months," he said.

French President Jacques Chirac also put to rest speculations that France was diverging from other members of the coalition after a September 19 meeting with U.S. President George Bush. Both leaders underscored that they share the same objective and same approach in dealing with Iran's nuclear ambitions. Bush said European countries would remain engaged with Iran to convince it to suspend its nuclear program and return to negotiations, but he said if Iran continues to stall, the coalition of countries engaged in the matter would move ahead with sanctions.

Clarifying his position, Chirac suggested that the suspension of Iran's enrichment program and a suspension of action within the Security Council should be simultaneous measures preceding a resumption of negotiations.

Burns said that the United States already has begun taking measures to isolate Iran economically.

"We are working with the financial community worldwide to impress upon them the cost of doing business with Iran," he said. "And we're making the case that Iran is not a good risk for further investment in any field, and we're beginning to see banks decide that they will not continue with new lending to Iran, and some European and Asian banks actually curtailing their operations quite significantly."

He said there is a good chance that economic sanctions could convince Iran to change its course of action because Iran is deeply involved in international trade and seeks integration into the world economy.

He also spoke about the dynamic complexity of political currents within Iran and speculated that there are moderates who might be more inclined to work with the international community than to defy it.

"This is a country undergoing a vast transformation in the way that it views itself," he said. "What we hope will emerge is an Iranian government that realizes that a policy of the type espoused by Ahmadi-Nejad --

of aggressive behavior in the region which has a lot of the Arab countries very concerned, a clear effort to create a nuclear weapons capability, and a clear effort to continue the funding of terrorist groups -- that's going to create a vast international coalition against Iran."

Transcripts of Rice's interviews with ABC television ( <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/72642.htm> ), NBC television ( <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/72641.htm> ) and CBS television ( <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2006/72640.htm> ) are available on the State Department Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)  
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\*WPD202 09/19/2006

Bush Sends Message of Hope to Middle East  
(United States is not waging war with Islam, he says) (840)

By Judy Aita  
Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- Speaking directly to the people of the Middle East from the podium of the U.N. General Assembly, President Bush urged them and their governments to support democracy and moderation and assured them that the United States is not at war with Islam.

"My country desires peace," the president said. "Extremists in your midst spread propaganda claiming that the West is engaged in a war against Islam. This propaganda is false and its purpose is to confuse you and justify acts of terror.

"We respect Islam, but we will protect our people from those who pervert Islam to sow death and destruction," he said.

The goal of the United States, Bush said, "is to help you build a more tolerant and hopeful society that honors people of all faiths and promotes the peace."

In his sixth address to the opening of the General Assembly since he took office, the president emphasized his agenda for freedom and rejection of terrorism, especially his positive vision for the Middle East.

Contrary to opinions in some quarters, democratic changes in the Middle East are not destabilizing the region, Bush said. "The stability we thought we saw in the Middle East was a mirage," he said. "For decades, millions of men and women in the region have been trapped in oppression and hopelessness, and these conditions left a generation disillusioned and made this region a breeding ground for extremism."

The president pointed out the results of dramatic change in the region: a democratically elected President Hamid Karzai sat in Afghanistan's seat at the U.N. session; a democratic government in Iraq was represented by President Jalal Talabani.

Bush praised Iraqis for braving car bombers and assassins to vote and said, "We will not abandon your struggle to build a free nation. ... We will not yield the future of your country to terrorist and extremists."

The United States and its partners will continue to stand with the government and "continue to help you secure the international assistance and investment you need to create jobs and opportunity," Bush said.

The president also praised the people of Afghanistan for their courage and determination to live in peace and freedom.

"Forces from more than 40 countries, including members of the NATO alliance, are bravely serving side by side with you against the extremists who want to bring down the free government you've established. We'll help you defeat these enemies and build a free Afghanistan that will never again oppress you or be a safe haven for terrorists," Bush said.

Although the president praised the people of Lebanon for freeing themselves from Syrian domination and highlighted elections in Algeria, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Bahrain, Yemen and Egypt, he had harsh words for the leaders of Iran and Syria who, he said, are increasing their countries' isolation from the world.

Iran must abandon its ambitions for nuclear weapons, Bush said. "The United Nations has passed a clear resolution requiring that the regime in Tehran meet its international obligations."

The president spoke directly to Iranians, saying that their future faces obstacles because "your rulers have chosen to deny you liberty and to use your nation's resources to fund terrorism and fuel extremism and pursue nuclear weapons."

To the people of Syria, Bush said, "your land is home to a great people with a proud tradition of learning and commerce. Today your rulers have allowed your country to become a crossroad for terrorism. In your midst, Hamas and Hezbollah are working to destabilize the region and your government is turning your country into a tool of Iran."

The Syrian government must end its support for terror and live at peace with its neighbors, he said.

"The more hopeful world that is within our reach, a world beyond terror where ordinary men and women are free to determine their own destiny, where the voices of moderation are empowered and where the extremists are marginalized by the peaceful majority. This world can be ours if we seek it and if we work together," he said.

The president's message to the Middle East was well received in the General Assembly hall, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs Kristin Silverberg told the Washington File in an interview after the president's speech.

She said that many delegations reacted very positively to both the president's hopeful vision for the Middle East and the United States' positive freedom agenda.

"Addressing his comments directly to the people living under some repressive regimes and also to people living in emerging and newer democracies was a powerful message," Silverberg said.

Text ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060919-4.html> ) of the president's address to the General Assembly and a fact sheet ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060919-3.html> ) on that address are available on the White House Web site.

For ongoing coverage of the 61st Session of the U.N. General Assembly, see The United States and the United Nations ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international\\_security/UNGA\\_2005.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/UNGA_2005.html) ).

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New U.S. Port Security Measures Move Closer to Becoming Law  
(Bush promises to sign legislation if sent to him by Congress) (690)

By Elizabeth Kelleher  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington – The U.S. Senate unanimously passed the Port Security Improvement Act of 2006 on September 14. The bill is similar to one passed by the U.S. House in May, and the two versions must be reconciled before a final measure can be sent to the White House for the president's signature.

President Bush said, "I look forward to the House and Senate resolving their differences ... and sending this legislation to me for my signature."

The bills would codify and strengthen programs that already are under way, authorize more money for port security, call for pilot programs to scan all cargo coming through a port, encourage international standards for container security and require the U.S. government to develop a plan to ensure the resumption of trade after a terrorist attack.

U.S. seaports move more than 95 percent of overseas trade and, in 2005, logged 53,000 calls by foreign-flagged vessels, according to the office of Maine's Senator Susan Collins, a sponsor of the legislation.

Current programs that would be expanded include the Container Security Initiative (CSI) and the Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism (C-TPAT). Under CSI, a partner at a foreign port notifies the United States of details about the cargo 24 hours before containers are loaded. U.S. officials then analyze the risk, based on the shipper and on the history of the container and can ask the foreign port to put it through a high-energy detector or to open it. C-TPAT offers incentives to importers to the United States to share information on their employees with the United States.

The legislation would set up new pilot programs that would screen 100 percent of cargo being sent to the United States, with the goal of making that level of scrutiny standard – although there is no deadline for such action.

Peter Gatti, vice president of the National Industrial Transportation League, said his organization is supportive of the bills but concerned about delays that might result if, in the future, 100 percent of cargo must go through radiation detectors. He said that today the technology is "not reliable and reports false positives," and thus would cause slowdowns if the 11 million containers that come through U.S. ports each year had to be scanned.

The Senate bill would call for a study of user fees, also a concern of the league's 700 members – mostly companies, like large retailers and car manufacturers, that purchase transportation services. "A security fee to enhance technology to expedite shipping and do accurate scanning? I don't think there will be objections," Gatti said, asking, "But are monies ... going to be diverted" to something other than port security programs?

Despite sharing concern about the prospect of 100 percent scanning in the future, a spokesman for the American Association of Port Authorities said that organization strongly supports the Senate legislation's proposed \$400 million a year for the Port Security Grant Program, which could be used by ports to make physical improvements to security – paying for fences, lights, gates or surveillance cameras. Since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the government has spent \$24 billion at airports but only \$10 billion at ports, most of which has gone to federal agencies, not to the port authorities, according to the American Association of Port Authorities.

Of the legislation, Thomas Kornegay, president of the International Association of Ports and Harbors, said, "I think it's good. It provides more customs agents and more security for cargo coming into the United States. This is all positive."

But even though the House of Representatives, the Senate and the president favor the legislation, there might not be enough time in the current Congress for a conference committee to iron out differences between the House and Senate versions. Only a few weeks, at most, remain before members of Congress will leave Washington to campaign before the November elections. The prospects for a post-election session are unknown.

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\*WPD204 09/19/2006

World Bank's Wolfowitz Urges Action by Aid Donors, Recipients  
(Development commitments "at risk," especially in Africa, he says) (460)

By Kathryn McConnell  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington—Aid donors and leaders of poor countries and countries in crisis must move faster to implement pro-development policies, says World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz.

Otherwise, he said, "the international community is at risk of falling short on its commitments" to help these countries advance out of poverty, Wolfowitz told the bank's board of governors September 19.

Wolfowitz spoke during the annual meetings in Singapore of the bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Africa, in particular, needs more donor attention, Wolfowitz said, citing it as "the one region that has been conspicuously left behind" in experiencing advances in growth that have benefited countries in other areas of the world.

Wolfowitz said the bank is increasing its support for private-sector development and for improving infrastructure, education and health in the region but that there still exists a need for a tracking system common to all donors "to identify gaps and take action to fill them."

He said that even though some countries in Africa have progressed, nations in the region that have recently emerged from crisis—Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic—face added obstacles on the road to development.

"Their leaders need to move swiftly to improve the lives of their citizens and stabilize a fragile peace," he said of the post-conflict nations.

And, he said, "The international development community must move more swiftly to support them."

Wolfowitz also said that "Sudan is a grim exception" to the trend of African countries emerging from years of crisis, and that the international community "must act soon and act decisively to end the violence" in that country.

He also said donors must act quickly to eliminate obstacles to development for Lebanon.

Citing good governance as key to faster economic growth, Wolfowitz said "each country must find its own path" across cultures, faiths, and national boundaries to be able to "control their own destinies." (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060915161116AKllennoCcM0.7969934> ).)

Good governance, he said, "ensures every development dollar is used to fight poverty, hunger and disease" and leads to faster and stronger growth.

Wolfowitz said that since mid-2005 the World Bank Group of agencies has set records in providing financing to poor countries:

- \$9.5 billion from the International Development Association to the world's poorest countries, half in Africa;

- \$14.2 billion to middle-income countries from the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development;
- \$1.3 billion in investment guarantees from the Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency; and
- \$6.7 billion from the International Finance Corporation.

A transcript (

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21058341~pagePK:34370~piPK:42770~theSitePK:4607,00.html> ) of Wolfowitz's remarks is available on the World Bank Web site.

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\*WPD205 09/19/2006

Free Trade Agreement with Oman Gains Final Passage by Senate  
(Democrats continue raising objections over workers' rights issues) (380)

Washington -- The Senate has passed legislation implementing a free-trade agreement (FTA) with Oman, clearing the bill for President Bush to sign, despite objections from Democrats over workers' rights issues.

In a 62-32 vote September 19, senators approved the FTA, the fifth agreement in what would become the U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Area envisioned by Bush. The United States already has completed FTAs with Israel, Jordan, Morocco and Bahrain and is negotiating one with the United Arab Emirates.

When it goes into effect the FTA with Oman immediately would allow duty-free treatment on all consumer and industrial trade between the two countries. Oman would eliminate duties on 87 percent of U.S. agricultural products immediately and phase out duties on the remainder over 10 years.

"I am delighted the Senate has cleared this important free trade agreement for the President's signature," U.S. Trade Representative Susan Schwab said. "The Oman FTA advances the president's vision for economic integration and development in the Middle East and participation in the peaceful community of trading nations. It holds important promise for the people of Oman and the United States."

The House of Representatives narrowly passed the bill 221-205 in July. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060720181442SAikceinawz0.3746454> ).)

Republican leaders in the Senate have rebutted Democrats' arguments over the workers' rights issues. They say a royal decree issued by Oman in July would reform Oman labor law, including changes allowing collective bargaining, prohibiting dismissal of workers for union activity, guaranteeing the right to strike and increasing penalties for child labor violations.

Many Democrats have remained skeptical. When submitting the bill to Congress, the Bush administration refused to accept language offered by Democratic Senator Kent Conrad and approved unanimously in the Senate Finance Committee that would have prohibited FTA treatment to any goods from Oman made with slave labor.

Administration officials argued that Conrad's language was unnecessary because the FTA has mechanisms adequate for resolving disputes about labor rights.

Two-way trade between the United States and Oman has remained relatively small, just over \$1 billion in 2005.



For additional information, see U.S.-Middle East Free Trade Area ([http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle\\_east\\_north\\_africa/us\\_me\\_free\\_trade.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/mena/middle_east_north_africa/us_me_free_trade.html) ).

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\*WPD206 09/19/2006

White House Sponsors First International Literacy Conference  
(First lady announces \$1 million contribution to UNESCO reading program) (760)

By Judy Aita  
Washington File Staff Writer

New York -- Welcoming representatives of more than 75 nations to the inaugural White House Conference on Global Literacy, U.S. first lady Laura Bush challenged governments to educate all people - men, women and children, rich and poor -- and urged private-sector organizations to dedicate their resources to ending illiteracy.

Investment in education, she said, "no matter how significant, is always worthwhile, because investing in literacy and education helps governments meet their fundamental obligations by improving opportunities for children and families, by strengthening their economies and by keeping their citizens in good health."

The first lady announced a \$1 million U.S. contribution to the Literacy Assessment and Monitoring Program (LAMP) of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Through LAMP, many countries are working to determine which people in their country cannot read, where people live who cannot read and why people cannot read. That information will help remove obstacles to reading, the first lady said.

The site of the conference -- the New York Public Library -- provided a moving testament to the power of reading. The library, one of the greatest in the world, has books and artifacts spanning 5,000 years. It has scholarly research collections and a network of community libraries. Virtually all the library's many collections and services are free to all. In fact, the library says on its Web site, it has "but one criterion for admission: curiosity."

Literacy, said Paul LeClerc, president of The New York Public Library, "is the greatest gift a government can give to its citizens."

From the personal experiences shared by conference leaders to the panelists who discussed programs in their countries, the emphasis was on the significance of simple gestures in helping others to read and the importance of instilling the value of education. They all shared a commitment to the international fight to eradicate illiteracy, promote education and give children -- and, if necessary, adults -- a chance to read.

Laura Bush was accompanied by her daughter Barbara and her mother-in-law, former first lady Barbara Bush, who also made literacy her focus during her time in the White House.

"We represent three generations of women who love to read," the first lady said. "Reading, in fact, is so important to us -- is such a part of our lives -- that our lives have been built around it."

"My mother loved to read and she taught me to love reading. I liked reading so much that I made it into my career by becoming a teacher and a librarian," she said.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice also attended the conference, and spoke of the value her own grandfather had placed on education. An African-American sharecropper in segregated Alabama at the

beginning of the 20th century, her grandfather found a way to get a college education -- or "book learning," as he called it.

Her grandfather "passed that commitment on to his family through generations. Our lives were transformed by education," Rice said. "I have no doubt that education is the single greatest force for equality in the world."

The variety of successful literacy programs highlighted at this first session centered around three areas: mother-child literacy and intergenerational learning, literacy for health, and literacy for economic self-sufficiency.

Participants discussed nine programs that can serve as models for other communities and nations.

Panelists on the mother-child literacy program were Maria Diarra Keita, founding director of the Institute for Popular Education in Mali, Florence Molefe, facilitator of the Family Literacy Project in South Africa, and Perri Klass, president of the Reach Out and Read National Center in the United States.

Hasina Mojadidi, instructional development coordinator for Learning for Life in Afghanistan, Salah Sabri Sebeh, head of the Basic Education Sector of Caritas Egypt, and Gonzalo Fiorilo, director of ALFALIT, Bolivia, gave presentations on literacy for health.

Discussing literacy for economic self-sufficiency were Koumba Boly Barry, coordinator of the directorate for development and cooperation of the Program for Literacy and Training in Burkina Faso, C. Krishna Mohan Rao, deputy director of the directorate of adult education of the government of Andhra Pradesh in India, and Regina Celia Esteves de Siqueira, chief executive officer of ALFASOL in Brazil.

More than 200 first ladies and spouses, ministers of education, foundation representatives, library experts and nongovernmental organization representatives attended the half-day program.

For additional information on education initiatives, see Partnership for a Better Life (<http://usinfo.state.gov/partners/partnership/people/education.html>).

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\*WPD207 09/19/2006

Financial Institutions Agree To Enhance Anti-Corruption Efforts

(In Singapore, representatives also vow more help to middle-income countries) (540)

By Kathryn McConnell

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The major policy-making body of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF) September 18 approved a plan to strengthen good governance and anti-corruption efforts.

Members of the joint Development Committee, meeting in Singapore in conjunction with the annual gathering of delegates of World Bank-IMF member countries, also agreed to put more effort into helping middle-income countries improve their systems of governance and eradicate poverty.

Mid-income countries, which have "evolving and diverse needs," are home to 70 percent of the world's poor, according to a World Bank press release.

Country ownership of actions to promote good governance and fight corruption will be "central to implementation" of those efforts, said the committee's chair, Alberto Carrasquilla of Colombia.

The committee emphasized that "predictability, transparency, and consistent and equal treatment" of member countries are "guiding principles" of the bank, and that oversight by the committee of the "evolving" anti-corruption strategy is important.

The committee also approved progress reports on the Education for All initiative, the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) and Multilateral Debt Relief initiatives, and an investment framework for clean energy and development.

The Education for All Initiative is an agreement by donors and poor countries to ensure universal primary education by 2015; the HIPC Initiative aims to eliminate unsustainable debt in the world's poorest and most heavily indebted countries, and redirect resources into the social sectors; and the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative combines debt relief with increased financing.

The previous day, the heads of the world's major multilateral development banks (MDBs) agreed to a "common framework" to fight fraud and corruption in activities their institutions help fund.

They agreed to adopt standard definitions of fraudulent and corrupt practices, common guidelines for investigations and due-diligence principles related to the integrity of private lending decisions.

They also agreed to strengthen their exchange of information about fraud and corruption, and to examine how enforcement and compliance actions taken by one member can be supported by the others, according to a second World Bank press release.

These decisions already have been approved by the board of directors of the World Bank, and by the boards of the African and inter-American development banks, the release said.

The new definitions will ensure the bank can impose sanctions if acts of fraud and corruption are found to have been committed by a recipient or intermediary recipient of bank funds.

Previously, the definitions were "narrowly tied to procurement process, the release said.

"A unified and coordinated approach is critical to the success of the shared effort to fight corruption and prevent it from undermining the effectiveness of our work," said World Bank President Paul Wolfowitz. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060915161116AKllennoCcM0.7969934> ).)

The Development Committee comprises ministers of finance or development from 24 countries.

The MDB group includes the heads of the African, Asian and Inter-American development banks; the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; the European Investment Bank; the World Bank and the IMF.

The full texts of releases on the Development Committee's approval of a governance strategy ( <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21056417~pagePK:64257043~piPK:437376~theSitePK:4607,00.html> ) and the MDB agreement ( <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:21056044~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html> ) are available on the World Bank Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

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\*WPD208 09/19/2006

United States Lauds Japan, Australia for North Korea Sanctions

(Multiple entities designated under U.N. Security Council Resolution 1695) (430)

By Jane Morse  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The United States praised actions taken by Japan and Australia to implement U.N. Security Council Resolution 1695, which condemned North Korea's July 5 test launches of a series of missiles and demanded the suspension of all activities related to that country's ballistic missile program.

In a statement released September 19, State Department spokesman Sean McCormack welcomed the Japanese and Australian governments' decisions to impose financial sanctions on entities believed to have provided support for North Korea's programs for weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and missiles.

Australia has designated 11 North Korean companies and one Swiss company as supporters of North Korea's WMD and missile programs. The Swiss company, Kohas AG, is believed to be partially under the control of North Korean interests. Japan designated those 12 entities and three others.

In addition, both Japan and Australia have designated one individual, the president of Kohas AG, for providing support to North Korea's WMD and missile programs.

The United States has taken similar action under Executive Order 13382, which blocks the U.S.-based property of WMD proliferators and their supporters. The U.S. government targeted the same 12 entities and one individual for sanctions, and currently is reviewing additional steps that might be required to comply fully with Resolution 1695, McCormack said.

The Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1695 -- its first on North Korea since 1993 -- just 11 days after North Korea launched several short- to medium-range missiles capable of striking Japan, and a long-range missile that potentially could reach U.S. soil. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060720172308bpuh3.425235e-02> ).)

The resolution requires all U.N. member states to prevent missile and missile-related items, materials, goods or technology from being transferred to North Korea's missile or WMD programs. It also calls for steps to block the transfer of any financial resources for these programs.

"Today's actions will help protect the Japanese and Australian financial systems from exploitation by WMD and missile proliferators and their facilitators," McCormack said in his statement.

"We strongly encourage other states to undertake similar actions," he said.

The full text ( <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/72633.htm> ) of McCormack's statement is available on the State Department Web site.

For additional information, see The U.S. and the Korean Peninsula ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east\\_asia\\_pacific/north\\_korea.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/eap/east_asia_pacific/north_korea.html) ) and The Proliferation Security Initiative ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/is/img/assets/4756/brochure1.pdf> ) (PDF, 4 pages).

See also "Bush, Roh Emphasize Unified Stance on North Korea ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=November&x=20051117122049ajesrom0.7810785&t=livefeeds/wf-latest.html> )."

The full text ( <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2006/sc8778.doc.htm> ) of a press release that includes the text of Resolution 1695 is available at the U.N. Security Council Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

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\*WPD209 09/19/2006

U.S. Trade and Development Agency Announces Projects in Asia  
(Grants intended to support initiatives in Indonesia, Vietnam, China) (780)

By Susan Krause  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) announced September 15 that it has awarded four grants to fund projects in Indonesia, Vietnam and China.

The grants will fund technical assistance and investment analysis in areas as diverse as emergency preparedness, aviation system modernization and water supply management, the agency said.

The agency's goal is to support the development of modern infrastructure and encourage fair and open trading environments in developing and middle-income countries.

#### EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS IN INDONESIA

A technical assistance grant of \$391,000 to Badan Meteorologi dan Geofisika (BMG), Indonesia's meteorology and geophysics agency, will help support the development of a reliable emergency communications system for use during natural disasters and other hazardous situations.

With a large population scattered across an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands, the Indonesian government has faced tremendous obstacles in establishing a reliable means of conveying information rapidly to the public during emergencies.

The country lies in one of the world's most active zones of seismic activity, and in 2006 alone suffered five major earthquakes, resulting in hundreds dead and thousands displaced. Indonesia bore the brunt of the damage from the December 2004 earthquake and subsequent tsunami in the Indian Ocean region.

"This agreement demonstrates the sustained U.S. government commitment to both develop a comprehensive tsunami warning system for the Indian Ocean and aid Indonesia in its recovery from the 2004 tsunami and subsequent disasters," said John Heffern, chargé d'affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta.

Grant funds will be used to support reliable communications between BMG and Bakornas, Indonesia's national disaster-management agency, and to connect eight planned regional operations centers with the national operations center in Jakarta. The project also will set up a notification and communications system for first responders and local government authorities and will automate control of coastal warning sirens in high-risk zones.

The new project follows a USTDA grant of \$650,000 to BMG in 2005. That grant provided technical assistance and operational support for BMG's national operations center. USTDA has awarded more than \$7.7 million for 19 reconstruction projects in Indonesia, Sri Lanka and Thailand related to the 2004 tsunami.

#### UPGRADING INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN VIETNAM

USTDA awarded two technical assistance grants totaling \$795,000 in Vietnam to help that nation's airline industry meet international efficiency standards and to modernize information systems in its finance ministry.

A \$523,000 grant to Vietnam Airlines Corporation will help the carrier meet requirements of the "Simplifying the Business" program of the International Air Traffic Association (IATA). The initiative is intended to establish international consistency and greater cost efficiency in the airline industry's handling of commercial transactions via the Internet.

By meeting IATA standards in electronic ticketing processes and freight handling, Vietnam Airlines will be able to enter into code-sharing arrangements with other international carriers, according to USTDA. Unisys Corporation of Blue Bell, Pennsylvania, will provide assistance to the airline under the USTDA grant.

A second grant of \$272,000 will help Vietnam's finance ministry create a modern information system for financial statistics based on International Monetary Fund standards. The ministry has approved a plan to complete the system by 2010.

The new system is expected to provide "reliable, transparent and up-to-date trade and economic data consistent with the expectations of international investors and financial institutions," according to USTDA.

#### MANAGING STORM WATER IN CHINA

USTDA awarded a grant of \$533,016 to the Beijing Water Authority (BWA), partially funding a study that will evaluate the viability of an integrated management system for storm-water runoff in China's capital city.

In collaboration with EDAW Inc., a San Francisco-based corporation that provides services including environmental impact assessment and resource management planning, BWA plans to develop a system that will use computer modeling and water sensors to assess accumulation of storm water and diversion of runoff into "combined outflow or treatment plants." Through this process, local precipitation could be used to increase the country's water supply.

The USTDA grant also will fund a pilot study of a system prototype.

The grant is intended to improve China's ability to manage water demand and relieve water scarcity in northeastern China.

USTDA has funded more than 80 projects in China since 2001, supporting significant development objectives. The development agency has focused in particular on projects in the areas of transportation, energy and environment.

The full texts ( [http://www.tda.gov/USTDA/Press Release Archive/Press Releases/pressarchive.htm](http://www.tda.gov/USTDA/Press%20Release%20Archive/Press%20Releases/pressarchive.htm) ) of the grant announcements are available on USTDA's Web site.

For additional information on U.S. policies, see East Asia and the Pacific ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/eap> ) and Partnership for a Better Life ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/partners/> ).

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\*WPD210 09/19/2006

Bush Meets with Salvadoran, Honduran Presidents in New York  
(Central American relations, Nicaraguan elections among topics discussed) (720)

By Scott Miller  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- President Bush, Salvadoran President Tony Saca and Honduran President Manuel Zelaya discussed Central American relations, the upcoming elections in Nicaragua and other issues during separate September 18 meetings in New York, according to White House official Dan Fisk, senior director for Western Hemisphere affairs at the National Security Council.

Bush met separately with Saca and Zelaya in New York as part of a series of bilateral meetings coinciding with his participation in the U.N. General Assembly.

In a September 18 briefing on these bilateral sessions, Fisk said the situation in the region, specifically Central American issues and November 5 elections in Nicaragua, were covered in both of Bush's meetings.

"Each president respectfully expressed the importance of a free, fair, transparent process in Nicaragua and the importance of the democratic forces in Nicaragua having space to fully participate, and make sure that the playing field was as level as possible," said Fisk.

He added that Venezuela also was discussed in both half-hour meetings, but within the context of the energy situation in the region and the efforts of Venezuela's state-owned energy company to get a foothold in Central America.

"As much as anything, it was more of just a matter-of-fact discussion," said Fisk.

Both El Salvador and Honduras, he observed, have expressed their support for Guatemala -- not Venezuela -- for a rotating seat on the U.N. Security Council.

## EL SALVADOR

With regard to the bilateral session with Saca, Fisk indicated that the Honduran president raised the issue of crime and his nation's interest in greater cooperation with the United States in dealing with the growing transnational threat of gangs such as the Mara Salvatrucha (also known as MS-13).

Fisk added that Bush was very receptive to the idea of increased cooperation and wants to do more to deal with this problem, as it threatens not only both countries, but also the region as a whole.

Fisk told reporters that Saca then updated Bush on El Salvador's discussions with the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), which oversees U.S. foreign aid disbursed through the Millennium Challenge Account initiative. El Salvador has been in discussions and hopes to conclude an MCC compact this year. This would be the third compact with a Western Hemisphere country, Fisk said. He pointed out that Nicaragua and Honduras already have Millennium Challenge compacts.

Bush also thanked Saca and the Salvadoran people for their contribution to reconstruction efforts in Iraq, Fisk said. El Salvador has participated in seven rotations of troops to Iraq, and Bush was very appreciative of the efforts and the sacrifice that Salvadorans have made to support Iraqi democracy, said Fisk.

## HONDURAS

Bush and Zelaya met in June, and Fisk explained that their September 18 meeting was in many ways a follow-up to that meeting.

The Honduran president thanked Bush for his strong stance on immigration reform and hailed U.S.-Honduran cooperation in enforcing the U.S. Secure Border Initiative, Fisk said.

Zelaya and Bush also discussed the energy situation in Honduras. Honduras is one of the Western Hemisphere nations most dependent on imported oil, including oil to generate electricity, Fisk said.

"This is something of great concern to President Zelaya and Hondurans," he explained "President Zelaya wanted to give the president a brief on his thinking on how to proceed on this and [to offer] President Zelaya's proposal to create a mechanism to try to lower energy costs."

The White House official said that Bush's response to the Honduran leader stressed the importance of relying on market mechanisms and of limits on government interference. Bush also reaffirmed his strong

interest in considering alternative sources of fuel and energy, discussed ethanol and other fuel alternatives, and encouraged Central Americans to explore how sugar cane can be converted into ethanol.

Finally, Bush and Zelaya briefly conferred about the situation in Cuba and the importance of supporting the Cuban people's aspirations for a democratic transition. In addition, Zelaya said Honduras has an outstanding maritime boundary issue with Cuba that Honduran officials would like to see resolved, Fisk said.

A transcript ( <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2006/09/20060918-12.html> ) of the briefing by Fisk and other administration officials is available on the White House Web site.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

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\*WPD211 09/19/2006

Press Group Warns of Specious New Arrests of Cuban Journalists  
(Cuban regime said to continue pressuring independent journalists) (570)

By Eric Green  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- The September 15 arrest of an independent journalist in Cuba "without any grounds" raises the possibility that the Cuban regime will make similar new arrests against other independent journalists in the Caribbean country, says the press advocacy group Reporters Without Borders.

In a September 18 statement, the Paris-based group condemned the detention of Ahmed Rodríguez Albacia, a member of the independent news agency Jóvenes sin Censura {Young People Without Censorship), who was arrested by state security agents in Havana.

The press freedom organization said Rodríguez's arrest "raises the possibility of new arrests without trial like those of [journalists] Oscar Mario González Pérez and Roberto de Jesús Guerra Pérez in July 2005 and Armando Betancourt in May 2006." The group said Rodríguez and his family have been the "target of constant harassment in recent weeks and we call for his immediate release." (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=August&x=200608101149341xeneerg0.6883661> ).)

Reporters Without Borders pointed out that Rodríguez's arrest comes as Cuba assumed the rotating presidency of the world's nonaligned movement at the end of a six-day summit meeting in Havana on September 16. As president of that movement, Cuba is supposed to ensure respect for human rights and civil liberties in member countries of that grouping, said Reporters Without Borders. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=200609111403081xeneerg0.5628473> ).)

The organization said that prior to his arrest, Rodríguez and his family had been threatened with physical harm by Cuba's state security apparatus and the Cuban Communist Party. In addition, Jóvenes sin Censura has been the target of constant harassment since its creation by a group of young journalists in September 2005, said Reporters Without Borders.

The press advocacy group reported that the Cuban regime "has not let up pressure" on the independent press and foreign journalists in Cuba ever since Cuban dictator Fidel Castro's hospitalization and the transfer of power to his brother Raúl on July 31. Some journalists from the nonaligned movement's member countries were refused visas to cover the Havana summit, said Reporters Without Borders.



The nonaligned movement was founded in September 1961 by countries that did not want to take sides in that era's Cold War between the United States and the former Soviet Union, said Reporters Without Borders.

Reporters Without Borders previously has called on Raúl Castro, Cuba's acting leader, to release immediately and unconditionally all of the country's independent journalists who are in prison.

"We are waiting for a gesture of clemency towards the 23 journalists who have been in jail" since the Castro regime's crackdown on Cuba's independent press in 2003, Reporters Without Borders said in an August 9 statement. The group has called Cuba the world's "second biggest prison for journalists," after China.

The U.S. State Department said in an April 5 report that Cuban officials and their "proxies" increasingly tormented pro-democracy activists and independent journalists through the use of mob actions known as "acts of repudiation."

The department's report, called Supporting Human Rights and Democracy: The U.S. Record 2005-2006, said accused dissidents, some charged with common crimes, "received sham trials, and those sent to prison were often held in harsh conditions."

The Western Hemisphere section of the report ( <http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/shrd/2005/63949.htm> ) is available on the State Department Web site.

For more information on U.S. policy, see Cuba and the United States ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/wh/americas/cuba.html> ).

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\*WPD212 09/19/2006

White House Faults Venezuela's Counternarcotics Efforts  
(Cooperation with Bolivia since October 2005 also a concern) (610)

By Scott Miller  
Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- Venezuela has "failed demonstrably" during the past 12 months to adhere to its obligations under international counternarcotics agreements, according to the White House.

Under U.S. law, the White House is required to compile an annual list of major drug-transit or drug-producing countries and assess these governments' efforts to combat illicit drugs. The "majors list" released September 18 includes Afghanistan, Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela.

A country's presence on the list is not necessarily an adverse reflection of its government's counternarcotics efforts or level of cooperation with the United States, but on September 18 the White House faulted Venezuela for not adhering to its obligations under international counternarcotics agreements.

The White House explained that the decision on Venezuela reflects the country's unresponsiveness to U.S. requests for counternarcotics cooperation, as well as the Venezuelan government's continued lack of action against drug trafficking through and within its borders.

"Venezuela's importance as a transshipment point for drugs bound for the United States and Europe has continued to increase in the past 12 months -- a situation both enabled and exploited by corrupt Venezuelan officials," the White House said in a memorandum. "Venezuela has not used available tools to counter the growing drug threat."

The White House specifically faulted the Venezuelan government for not prosecuting corrupt officials in a meaningful way, not renewing formal counternarcotics cooperation with the United States, and not using judicial wiretap orders to investigate drug cases. The White House also noted that seizures of illegal drugs transiting the country have dropped, according to the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA).

In 2005, Venezuela was also said have to "failed demonstrably" as a partner in the war on drugs -- in part, because it ended most air interdiction cooperation, refused U.S. counternarcotics overflights of Venezuela, curtailed military and law enforcement cooperation, replaced its most effective counternarcotics officials, and failed to implement its own money laundering and organized crime legislation. All these problems persisted in 2006, the White House said.

Although countries found to have "failed demonstrably" in their counternarcotics efforts are, according to U.S. law, ineligible for many types of U.S. foreign assistance, the White House has expressed deep concern over the deterioration of democratic institutions in Venezuela and has issued a vital national interests certification that will allow the U.S. government to provide funds that support Venezuela's democratic institutions and political party system.

#### Bolivia

The White House also expressed concern over the decline in Bolivian counternarcotics cooperation since October 2005.

The White House noted that Bolivian government policies allowed the expansion of coca cultivation and slowed the pace of eradication until mid-year, when eradication efforts picked up.

Furthermore, the White House said that the Bolivian government's "zero cocaine, but not zero coca" policy has focused primarily on interdiction, to the near exclusion of complementary policies on eradication and alternative development.

While the White House applauded Bolivia's efforts in seizing cocaine and decommissioning laboratories, it encouraged the government of Bolivia to refocus its efforts on eliminating excess coca, the source of cocaine.

This refocus, the White House added, would include eradicating at least 5,000 hectares, including in the Chapare region; establishing tight controls on the sale of licit coca leaf for traditional use; implementing strong precursor chemical control measures to prevent conversion of coca to cocaine; and the reforming or rescinding of certain laws pertaining to coca.

The White House plans to review Bolivia's performance in these and other specific areas within six months.

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\*WPD213 09/19/2006

2008 Diversity Visa Lottery Program Registration Opens October 4

(Applicants are encouraged to apply early in the two-month registration period) (460)

Washington -- Registration for the United States' 2008 Diversity Visa Lottery program (DV-2008) will be held October 4 to December 3, the State Department announced September 19.

Applicants whose names are selected randomly will be eligible to apply for one of 50,000 permanent resident visas made available annually to persons from countries with low rates of immigration to the United States.

The 2008 lottery will mark the fourth year in which the registration process has been conducted entirely via the Internet. Persons seeking to enter the lottery program must register online through the designated Web site ([www.dvlottery.state.gov](http://www.dvlottery.state.gov) ( <http://www.dvlottery.state.gov/> )), and digital photos must be submitted with the registration form. Paper entries will not be accepted, according to the DV-2008 instructions.

Entries will be accepted between noon Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) (1600 GMT), Wednesday, October 4, and noon Eastern Standard Time (EST) (1700 GMT) Sunday, December 3. No entries will be accepted after that time, according to the DV-2008 instructions.

Applicants are encouraged to enter early in the registration period, because excessive demand might slow down the system as the deadline nears. Applicants should be aware that there is only one official site for the diversity visa lottery registration, according to the State Department.

Applicants must meet certain education or work experience requirements to register for DV-2008. These are outlined in the instructions.

Natives of the some countries are not eligible to apply because those nations sent a total of more than 50,000 immigrants to the United States over the previous five years: Brazil, Canada, China (mainland-born), Colombia, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Mexico, Pakistan, the Philippines, Peru, Poland, Russia, South Korea, United Kingdom (except Northern Ireland) and its dependent territories, and Vietnam. Persons born in Hong Kong SAR, Macau SAR and Taiwan are eligible.

Registration is free. The State Department will notify winning entrants for the 2008 lottery by mail between May 2007 and July 2007.

In July, the results of the 2007 Diversity Visa Lottery were announced. Approximately 82,000 people in 175 nations received letters from the U.S. State Department informing them that they were eligible to apply for a permanent resident visa to the United States. More than 5.5 million people submitted entries in the registration process. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060719121820cmretrop0.7058069> ).)

The full text ( <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2006/72835.htm> ) of the media note and instructions ( [http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types\\_1318.html](http://travel.state.gov/visa/immigrants/types/types_1318.html) ) for applying for the 2008 Diversity Visa Lottery program are available on the State Department Web site. The instructions are in English; translations in additional languages will be posted as they become available.

For additional information on U.S. immigration policy, see Immigration Reform ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global\\_issues/immigration.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/gi/global_issues/immigration.html) ).

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\*WPD214 09/19/2006

State's Hughes Says U.S. Security Requires Questioning Detainees  
(Under secretary discusses detainees, Middle East during television interview) (400)

Washington – Faced with unprecedented threats against the United States by terrorists, the Bush administration has had to make difficult decisions regarding the treatment of detainees, said Karen Hughes, under secretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs.

While working to protect itself from the threat from terrorists who attack around the world, the United States is trying to “apply international standards, to a group of people who don't wear the uniform of a state and don't respect the law of war and aren't signatories to any international treaties,” Hughes told MSNBC September 17.

Hughes was responding to questions about U.S. obligations under Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions as it applies to detained terrorist suspects. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060914165153esnamfuak0.7021753> ).)

President Bush believes that the CIA should have the authority to question senior-level al-Qaida detainees who might have information that could prevent a future terrorist attack, Hughes said. It is also important to have clear rules for interrogators. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060917185142namdeirfjm0.4244348> ).)

“What the president is trying to do is define what that means using the standards that Senator [John] McCain championed last year, which was a prohibition on cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment,” said Hughes.

In October 2005, the U.S. Senate voted to define and limit techniques used by U.S. troops to interrogate suspects detained in connection with terrorism, both in the United States and abroad. Senator John McCain, an Arizona Republican, sponsored the amendment. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2005&m=October&x=20051006154700maduobba0.6606256> ).)

When asked about the Iraq war, Hughes said it is important to remember that al-Qaida has said that Iraq is the central front in the war against terror. “We think defeating the terrorists there is absolutely in our security interest,” she said.

Hughes also said that Bush has a “comprehensive vision for a Middle East that's a different kind of place, a place of greater hope, a place of greater opportunity, a place where people are more free to express themselves, a place where people can participate in the political life of their country.” (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060918145446eaifas0.7366602> ).)

The president is personally committed to a two-state solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, where both parties can live “side by side in peace and security,” she said.

For additional information, see Detainee Issues ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human\\_rights/detainees.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/dhr/human_rights/detainees.html) ).

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\*WPD215 09/19/2006

United States, Russia Sign New Plutonium Liability Protocol

(Program seeks to eliminate plutonium equivalent of 16,000 nuclear weapons) (550)

Washington -- The United States and Russia have signed a protocol that will allow liability issues to be resolved for an important nuclear nonproliferation program, the State Department and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) announced September 15.

NNSA's Elimination of Weapons-Grade Plutonium Production Program is designed to convert excess weapons-grade plutonium into forms that cannot be used for weapons by terrorists or others. According to a statement by State Department spokesman Sean McCormack, the protocol "is a key step to enable cooperation between the two countries."

The plan is for each country to convert 34 metric tons of excess weapon-grade plutonium into mixed oxide (MOX) fuel for use in nuclear reactors.

According to NNSA, which is an agency within the U.S. Department of Energy responsible for enhancing national security through the military application of nuclear science, irradiating the MOX fuel converts it into a form that cannot be used for nuclear weapons. (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=July&x=20060726182535adynned0.387768> ).)

The total amount of plutonium envisaged for conversion under this program -- 68 metric tons (about 150,000 pounds) -- is equal to the amount used in more than 16,000 nuclear weapons. Eliminating this weapon-grade plutonium supports the president's National Security Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction, McCormack said.

Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman said the agreement "demonstrates that both countries continue to be committed to this important nonproliferation program. ... It's an important part of the Bush administration's effort to keep nuclear material out of the hands of terrorists."

Robert Joseph, under secretary of state for arms control and international security, signed the protocol for the United States while Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Kislyak signed for his government.

Negotiations on the protocol were completed in 2005. The Russian government recently completed its formal process approving it for signature, according to the NNSA.

"Signing this protocol with our Russian partners formally resolves the issue of what liability framework would apply for cooperation ... to eliminate this dangerous material from Russian and U.S. stocks," NNSA Administrator Linton Brooks said. The two sides are continuing to work together to implement the plutonium disposition agreement, Brooks added.

Under the original Cooperative Threat Reduction program initiated in 1992, Russia bore complete liability for anything that went wrong. In 1999, Russia would not agree to extend the agreement without a liability exception for intentional wrongdoing. Under the new protocol's limited exception, Russia would not be liable for damages resulting from deliberate wrongdoing on the part of a U.S. employee or contractor.

McCormack said that signing the protocol also would have "significant benefits for other cooperative programs between the United States and Russia," and that important nonproliferation and security discussions were proceeding on the basis of it.

On the logistical side, NNSA says it is nearing completion of site-preparation activities for construction of a mixed oxide fuel fabrication facility at the Savannah River site in Aiken, South Carolina. The agency is awaiting passage of its appropriations bill for fiscal year 2007 before proceeding with construction.

More information ( <http://www.nnsa.doe.gov/na%2D20/ewgpp.shtml> ) on program is available on the NNSA Web site.

For additional information on U.S. nonproliferation programs, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international\\_security/arms\\_control.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html) ).

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\*WPD216 09/19/2006  
Bush Names Special Envoy for Darfur  
(Resolving humanitarian crisis in Sudan tops U.N. agenda) (960)

By Judy Aita  
Washington File United Nations Correspondent

United Nations -- President Bush has named Andrew Natsios, former administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), as a presidential special envoy to lead U.S. efforts to bring peace to the Darfur region in Sudan.

In his speech at the opening of the 61st U.N. General Assembly, the president focused on Darfur, addressing his remarks directly to the people of the region. "You have suffered unspeakable violence, and my nation has called these atrocities what they are -- genocide," Bush said.

"The world must step forward to provide additional humanitarian aid, and we must strengthen the African Union force that has done good work but is not strong enough to protect you," he said.

If the Sudanese government does not accept a transition from the African Union (AU) peacekeeping force to the larger, more robust U.N. peacekeeping operation in Darfur quickly, the president said, "the United Nations must act" because thousands of lives and the credibility of the United Nations are at stake.

The president also called on the international community "to step forward to provide additional humanitarian aid" and asked NATO to strengthen the AU force (AMIS) while it remains in Darfur.

With world leaders at U.N. headquarters for the assembly, diplomats see the week of September 18 as a critical one opportunity for focusing attention on Darfur and for convincing Sudanese officials to change their position on a U.N. peacekeeping force for the region.

The United States has submitted a draft resolution to the U.N. Security Council that would extend the mandate of the U.N. Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) for another six months.

UNMIS was established by the council in 2005 (Resolution 1590) to support the peace agreement between the government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army to help with humanitarian aid and guard against human rights abuses. Resolution 1706, adopted by the council on August 31, 2006, expanded the mandate of UNMIS to include Darfur and instructed the U.N. secretary-general to speed up planning for an expanded force in the region. (See related article (<http://usinfo.state.gov/xarchives/display.html?p=washfile-english&y=2006&m=September&x=20060911165439ajatdia0.7224542> ).)

The Security Council is planning to meet September 22 with Sudanese President Omar Hassan al-Bashir, who is opposing the deployment of the 20,000 peacekeepers and police units in Darfur under U.N. command.

"We deplore the ongoing violence in Darfur and the consequent deterioration of the humanitarian situation," U.S. Ambassador John Bolton said September 18. "At this critical juncture, it is imperative that the Security Council reiterate the need for the transition of AMIS to a United Nations operation."

It is critical that the missions be expanded concurrently to ensure the urgent assistance to AMIS is not jeopardized, Bolton said.

Bolton said that just as Sudan's Government of National Unity was able to overcome decades of violence in southern Sudan by respecting the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and cooperating with UNMIS, so should Khartoum be prepared to ensure a better future for its citizens in Darfur through the Darfur Peace Agreement and cooperation in the deployment of U.N. forces in Darfur.

"The notion that Sudan is not going to accept the presence of a U.N. peacekeeping force is something we don't find to be credible," Bolton said.

Peace activists held "Save Darfur" rallies around the world September 17 in an effort to highlight the desperate situation. "The world must act and it must do it now because time is not on our side," former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told an estimated crowd of 30,000 in New York City's Central Park.

Senator Norm Coleman, a Republican from Minnesota, and Senator Barbara Boxer, a Democrat from California -- members of the U.S. delegation to the General Assembly -- stressed that both major U.S. political parties are united on Darfur.

"Quite often we find ourselves on different sides on a number of issues, but on the issue of the importance of dealing with the genocide of Darfur we stand united. There is absolutely no question about it," Coleman said after meeting with Sudan's ambassador to the United Nations September 18.

"We need increased focus and attention to this issue. Resolution of these issues is often complex, there are nuances and layers, but the reality of this is genocide, is not complex. It's very clear ... it simply has to be done," Coleman said.

Boxer added that Americans and people around the world have shown great compassion by taking the time to rally, speak and raise funds. "To the very brave NGOs [nongovernmental organizations] and U.N. personnel who are going in there, we can only say thank you for keeping this issue on the agenda of the world," she said.

Having lost many family members during the Holocaust, Boxer said, she knows that "shining the light of truth on these inhumane acts is the first step to stopping them."

U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Louise Arbour has reported that, despite the May peace accord, the situation in Darfur has worsened steadily, with human rights abuses being committed on a large scale by government forces, the marauding Jingaweit militias and rebel groups.

The high commissioner told the Human Rights Council in Geneva that there is a "continued and clear failure or unwillingness" by the government to hold the perpetrators of horrific crimes accountable.

UNICEF says that more than 400,000 have lost their lives, some 2 million more have been driven from their homes in Darfur in the last three years and nearly 3 million depend on international aid for food, shelter and basic health needs.

For additional information, see Darfur Humanitarian Emergency ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/af/africa/darfur.html> ).

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

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\*WPD217 09/19/2006

U.S. Labor Protests Mugabe Attacks on Workers in Zimbabwe  
(Trade unionists rally outside embassy calling for end to violence) (640)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- More than 50 trade unionists marched outside the Zimbabwean Embassy in Washington September 18 to protest recent attacks against members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) by the government of President Robert Mugabe.

The Americans were protesting the September 14 action by Zimbabwean security forces, who broke up a peaceful demonstration by 250 ZCTU members demanding openness in government and better wages. A number of senior labor officials were beaten severely and arrested after they protested economic mismanagement by Mugabe that has led to a staggering 1,000 percent inflation rate and joblessness of more than 50 percent.

Chanting, "Stop the beatings, stop the torture," and "ZCTU, American workers support you," members of AFL-CIO, a major U.S. labor organization, marched in front of the Zimbabwean Embassy carrying placards that read "Promote workers' rights worldwide" and "Mugabe: Free unionists."

Barbara Shailor, an AFL-CIO program officer, said: "It is very important that we come here today because this is the day Mugabe is coming to New York to attend the annual meeting of the U.N. General Assembly. And we need to tell the embassy that we will not stand for the violation of trade union rights in Zimbabwe."

As a result of the September 14 attacks, Shailor said, ZCTU General Secretary Wellington Chibebe has "severe cuts to his head, three broken bones and severe bruises." ZCTU President Lovemore Matombo, has "a broken arm," and First Vice President Lucia Matibenga has "scratch marks all over her back. Her neck is swollen and her eardrums were damaged." All three also were taken into custody.

"What these people have gone through must not go unnoticed as Mugabe moves about the streets of New York," Shailor said.

David Claxton, an officer with the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists (CBTU), read out a number of demands for Mugabe, including investigation of the September 14 attacks, medical care for all those injured, protection of the right of labor to organize and "active government engagement with the ZCTU to resolve the economic crisis" in Zimbabwe.

Tony Baker, another CBTU member, told the crowd: "Almost 20 years ago, CBTU led a demonstration to the South African Embassy" protesting apartheid. "There is nothing different about South Africa then and Zimbabwe now. The only difference was that [South Africa] was a white regime oppressing black workers and this [Zimbabwe] is a black regime oppressing black workers."

David Dorn, director of international programs for the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), said, "We are here because this suppression of labor in Zimbabwe has just gone on far too long.

"Our organization has been working with the teachers' union in Zimbabwe for a number of years now, actually with help from the State Department. But the problem is people are suffering so much it's hard to sustain an education program in a country where people are scrabbling just to get by from day to day."

The United States has condemned the attacks. "The U.S. government condemns the Mugabe government's suppression of planned marches by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions. Over 100 individuals were arrested, including senior union leaders, and some were severely beaten as part of the effort to prevent the marches from taking place," U.S. State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said September 15.

"The government's actions against those wishing to protest on behalf of greater democracy, better wages and access to treatment for AIDS sufferers is another example of its denial of the basic rights of its citizens. We call for the immediate release of those detained and access to medical treatment for those who were injured," he said.



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Global Nuclear Energy Partnership Could Help Meet Energy Needs  
(Energy Secretary Bodman outlines conditions for maximum nuclear power benefits) (510)

Washington -- President Bush's proposal to make nuclear fuel accessible to all governments that forego uranium enrichment and plutonium reprocessing could meet the world's growing energy demands, limit carbon emissions and reduce proliferation dangers, according to Energy Secretary Samuel Bodman.

Addressing a general session of the International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna, Austria, Bodman quoted the president saying that the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership could "ensure that cheap, safe, and clean nuclear energy and its benefits are enjoyed by all who are in compliance with their nonproliferation obligations." (See related article ( <http://usinfo.state.gov/is/Archive/2006/Feb/09-744981.html> ).)

The secretary said world energy needs are met today primarily by using coal, natural gas and oil to generate electrical power. "But nuclear energy provides a host of benefits fossil fuels cannot match," Bodman said.

The secretary said four conditions must be present to achieve the maximum benefit from nuclear power:

- Nuclear power must be competitive with fossil fuels in generating electricity;
- Nuclear waste and spent fuel must be disposed of responsibly;
- Nuclear power must be safe; and
- The firmest safeguards over nuclear materials must be maintained.

Regarding disposal, he said the U.S. Energy Department wants to open a mountain repository for nuclear waste and spent fuel by 2017, and praised the progress Sweden and Finland are making in pursuing geologic repositories.

Bodman said the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership, along with a Russian proposal to establish international nuclear fuel service centers (starting with one in Russia) "share the same goal: to facilitate the global expansion of nuclear power to meet growing energy demands, limit carbon emissions, and reduce proliferation dangers."

The U.S. proposal through GNEP is "to develop and deploy advanced technologies for recycling spent nuclear fuel that do not result in separated plutonium," Bodman said. The goal is a multilateral effort to develop advanced, proliferation-resistant nuclear reactors suited to the energy needs of developing economies.

Though different proposals have been made for the future of nuclear power, he said, there is consensus that an international mechanism to assure an adequate supply of reactor fuel is critical both to meeting the world's energy needs and to advancing nonproliferation goals.

Bodman said the United States plans to work with the IAEA and any others willing to construct a framework to guarantee fuel at fair market rates, and to accommodate the storage, transport and processing of spent fuel.

He called for the IAEA, with U.S. help, to facilitate supplier-recipient contacts, promote the use of technological advances and help countries develop the expertise needed for effective use of nuclear energy.

An assured fuel supply "would considerably increase the energy independence, and thus political and strategic independence, of all nations, particularly smaller ones," Bodman said.

The full text ( <http://www.energy.gov/news/4167.htm> ) of Bodman's prepared remarks is available on the Energy Department Web site, as is additional information ( <http://www.gnep.energy.gov/default.html> ) on the Global Nuclear Energy Partnership.

For more on U.S. nonproliferation efforts, see Arms Control and Non-Proliferation ( [http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international\\_security/arms\\_control.html](http://usinfo.state.gov/is/international_security/arms_control.html) ).

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Fact Sheet: White House Outlines Bush Address to U.N. General Assembly  
(A bright future is taking root in the Middle East, Bush says) (1510)

(begin fact sheet)

The White House  
Office of the Press Secretary  
September 19, 2006

#### Address To The UN General Assembly: A More Hopeful World Beyond Terror And Extremism

Today, The President Addressed The United Nations General Assembly And Spoke About A More Hopeful World Beyond Terror And Extremism - Where Ordinary Men And Women Are Free To Determine Their Own Destiny, The Voices Of Moderation Are Empowered, And The Extremists Are Marginalized By The Peaceful Majority. President Bush believes this more hopeful world can be ours if we seek it and work together. At the start of the 21st century, it is clear that the world is engaged in a great ideological struggle between extremists who use terror as a weapon to create fear, and moderate people everywhere who are working for peace.

We Are Seeing A Bright Future Begin To Take Root In The Broader Middle East. The principles animating this future can be found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights' statement that the "equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world." In the nearly six decades since that document was approved, we have seen the forces of freedom and moderation transform entire continents.

- Some Of The Changes In The Broader Middle East Have Been Dramatic - More Than 50 Million People Have Been Given A Voice In The UN For The First Time In Decades. Afghanistan's seat in the UN is now held by the freely elected government of Afghanistan. Iraq's seat in the UN is now held by a democratic government that embodies the aspirations of the Iraqi people.

- Some Of The Changes In The Middle East Are Happening Gradually, But These Changes Are Real. Algeria has held its first competitive presidential election, and the military remained neutral. The United Arab Emirates recently announced that half the seats in its Federal National Council will be chosen by elections. Kuwait held elections in which women were allowed to vote and run for office for the first time. Citizens have voted in municipal elections in Saudi Arabia, in parliamentary elections in Jordan and Bahrain, and in multiparty presidential elections in Yemen and Egypt.

Some Have Argued That These Democratic Changes Are Destabilizing The Middle East - But The Stability We Thought We Saw In The Middle East Was A Mirage. For decades, millions of men and women in this region have been trapped in oppression and hopelessness. These conditions left a generation disillusioned and made the region a breeding ground for extremism.

Every Civilized Nation - Including Those In The Muslim World - Must Support Those In The Region Who Are Offering A More Hopeful Alternative. We must seek true stability through a free and just Middle East where the extremists are marginalized by millions of citizens in control of their own destinies.

The President Spoke Directly To People Across The Broader Middle East: America Desires Peace

- To The People Of Iraq: We Will Not Abandon You. Nearly 12 million Iraqis braved the car bombers and assassins last December to vote in free elections, and we will not abandon you in your struggle to build a free nation. America and its Coalition partners will continue to stand with Iraq's democratic government, help secure the international assistance and investment Iraq needs to create jobs and opportunity, and train Iraqis who have stepped forward to fight the enemies of freedom. In return, Iraq's leaders must make the difficult choices to bring security and prosperity.
- To The People Of Afghanistan: We Will Help You Defeat The Extremists Who Want To Destroy Afghanistan's Young Democracy. Since overthrowing the Taliban, Afghanistan has chosen its leaders in free elections and built a democratic government. Today, forces from more than 40 countries - including members of the NATO Alliance - are bravely serving side by side with the people of Afghanistan against the extremists. We will help you defeat these enemies and build a free Afghanistan that will never again oppress you or be a safe haven for terrorists.
- To The People Of Lebanon: We See Your Suffering, And The World Is Helping You Rebuild Your Country And Deal With The Armed Extremists Who Are Undermining Your Democracy By Acting As A State Within A State. Last year, the people of Lebanon inspired the world when they drove Syrian forces from their country and re-established democracy. Since then, they have been tested by the fighting that began with Hezbollah's unprovoked attacks on Israel. The UN has passed a good resolution that has authorized an international force, led by France and Italy, to help restore Lebanese sovereignty over Lebanese soil. For many years, Lebanon was a model of democracy, pluralism, and openness in the region - and it will be again.
- To The People Of Iran: The United States Respects You And Your Country. The greatest obstacle to a better future for Iran is that its rulers have chosen to deny the people of Iran liberty and use their nation's resources to fund terrorists, fuel extremism, and pursue nuclear weapons. The UN has passed a clear resolution requiring that the regime in Tehran meet its international obligations. Iran must abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions. The world has no objection to Iran's pursuit of a truly peaceful nuclear power program. We are working toward a diplomatic solution to this crisis, and we look to the day when the people of Iran can live in freedom - and America and Iran can be good friends and close partners in the cause of peace.
- To The People Of Syria: Your Government Must Choose A Better Way Forward. Syria is home to a great people with a proud tradition of learning and commerce. Today, Syria's rulers have allowed the country to become a crossroad for terrorists, and are turning the country into a tool of Iran, increasing Syria's isolation from the world. Syria's government can stop this growing isolation and create a more hopeful future for its country by ending its support for terror, living in peace with its neighbors, and opening the way to a better life for the Syrian people.
- To The People Of Darfur: You Have Suffered Unspeakable Violence, And America Has Called These Atrocities What They Are - Genocide. For the last two years, America has joined with the international community to provide emergency food aid and support an African Union peacekeeping force. Yet the suffering continues. The Security Council has approved a resolution that would transform the African Union force into a blue-helmeted force that is larger and more robust, but the regime in Khartoum is stopping the deployment of this force. If the Sudanese government does not approve this peacekeeping force quickly, the UN must act. Today, President Bush announced he is naming former USAID

Administrator Andrew Natsios as a Presidential Special Envoy to lead America's efforts to resolve the outstanding disputes and help bring peace to Darfur.

#### The World Must Stand Up For Peace In The Holy Land

By Supporting The Forces Of Democracy And Moderation, The World Can Help Israelis And Palestinians Build A More Hopeful Future And Achieve Peace In The Holy Land.

- President Bush Is Committed To Two Democratic States - Israel And Palestine - Living Side By Side In Peace And Security. President Abbas is committed to peace and to his people's aspirations for a state of their own. Prime Minister Olmert is also committed to peace and has said he intends to meet with President Abbas to make real progress on the outstanding issues between them.
- Earlier This Year, The Leaders Of Hamas Were Elected On A Platform Of Ending Corruption And Improving The Lives Of The Palestinian People. The world has sent a clear message to the leaders of Hamas: Serve the interests of the Palestinian people, abandon terror, recognize Israel, honor agreements, and work for peace.
- The President Has Directed Secretary Of State Rice To Lead A Diplomatic Effort To Engage Moderate Leaders Across The Region, Help The Palestinians Reform Their Security Services, And Support Israeli And Palestinian Leaders In Their Efforts To Come Together To Resolve Their Differences. Prime Minister Blair has indicated that his country will work with partners in Europe to help strengthen the governing institutions of an effective Palestinian administration. Countries like Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt have made clear they are willing to contribute the diplomatic and financial assistance necessary to help these efforts succeed.

Freedom, By Its Nature, Cannot Be Imposed - It Must Be Chosen

The World Must Choose Between Supporting The Moderates And Reformers Working For Change Across The Middle East - Or Yielding The Future To The Terrorists And Extremists. America has made its choice: we will stand with the moderates and reformers. Together we will support the dreams of good and decent people who are working to transform a troubled region - and by doing so, we will advance the high ideals on which the UN was founded.

(end fact sheet)

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Transcript: President Bush Addresses United Nations General Assembly  
(Speaks to the people across the broader Middle East) (2910)

(begin transcript)

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary  
(New York, New York)  
September 19, 2006

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

United Nations  
New York, New York

12:15 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. Secretary General, Madam President, distinguished delegates, and ladies and gentlemen: I want to thank you for the privilege of speaking to this General Assembly.

Last week, America and the world marked the fifth anniversary of the attacks that filled another September morning with death and suffering. On that terrible day, extremists killed nearly 3,000 innocent people, including citizens of dozens of nations represented right here in this chamber. Since then, the enemies of humanity have continued their campaign of murder. Al Qaeda and those inspired by its extremist ideology have attacked more than two dozen nations. And recently a different group of extremists deliberately provoked a terrible conflict in Lebanon. At the start of the 21st century, it is clear that the world is engaged in a great ideological struggle, between extremists who use terror as a weapon to create fear, and moderate people who work for peace.

Five years ago, I stood at this podium and called on the community of nations to defend civilization and build a more hopeful future. This is still the great challenge of our time; it is the calling of our generation. This morning, I want to speak about the more hopeful world that is within our reach, a world beyond terror, where ordinary men and women are free to determine their own destiny, where the voices of moderation are empowered, and where the extremists are marginalized by the peaceful majority. This world can be ours if we seek it and if we work together.

The principles of this world beyond terror can be found in the very first sentence of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This document declares that the "equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom and justice and peace in the world." One of the authors of this document was a Lebanese diplomat named Charles Malik, who would go on to become President of this Assembly. Mr. Malik insisted that these principles apply equally to all people, of all regions, of all religions, including the men and women of the Arab world that was his home.

In the nearly six decades since that document was approved, we have seen the forces of freedom and moderation transform entire continents. Sixty years after a terrible war, Europe is now whole, free, and at peace -- and Asia has seen freedom progress and hundreds of millions of people lifted out of desperate poverty. The words of the Universal Declaration are as true today as they were when they were written. As liberty flourishes, nations grow in tolerance and hope and peace. And we're seeing that bright future begin to take root in the broader Middle East.

Some of the changes in the Middle East have been dramatic, and we see the results in this chamber. Five years ago, Afghanistan was ruled by the brutal Taliban regime, and its seat in this body was contested. Now this seat is held by the freely elected government of Afghanistan, which is represented today by President Karzai. Five years ago, Iraq's seat in this body was held by a dictator who killed his citizens, invaded his neighbors, and showed his contempt for the world by defying more than a dozen U.N. Security Council resolutions. Now Iraq's seat is held by a democratic government that embodies the aspirations of the Iraq people, who's represented today by President Talabani. With these changes, more than 50 million people have been given a voice in this chamber for the first time in decades.

Some of the changes in the Middle East are happening gradually, but they are real. Algeria has held its first competitive presidential election, and the military remained neutral. The United Arab Emirates recently announced that half of the seats in its Federal National Council will be chosen by elections. Kuwait held elections in which women were allowed to vote and run for office for the first time. Citizens have voted in municipal elections in Saudi Arabia, in parliamentary elections in Jordan and Bahrain, and in multiparty presidential elections in Yemen and Egypt. These are important steps, and the governments should continue to move forward with other reforms that show they trust their people. Every nation that travels the road to freedom moves at a different pace, and the democracies they build will reflect their own culture and traditions. But the destination is the same: A free society where people live at peace with each other and at peace with the world.

Some have argued that the democratic changes we're seeing in the Middle East are destabilizing the region. This argument rests on a false assumption, that the Middle East was stable to begin with. The reality is that the stability we thought we saw in the Middle East was a mirage. For decades, millions of men and women in the region have been trapped in oppression and hopelessness. And these conditions left a generation disillusioned, and made this region a breeding ground for extremism.

Imagine what it's like to be a young person living in a country that is not moving toward reform. You're 21 years old, and while your peers in other parts of the world are casting their ballots for the first time, you are powerless to change the course of your government. While your peers in other parts of the world have received educations that prepare them for the opportunities of a global economy, you have been fed propaganda and conspiracy theories that blame others for your country's shortcomings. And everywhere you turn, you hear extremists who tell you that you can escape your misery and regain your dignity through violence and terror and martyrdom. For many across the broader Middle East, this is the dismal choice presented every day.

Every civilized nation, including those in the Muslim world, must support those in the region who are offering a more hopeful alternative. We know that when people have a voice in their future, they are less likely to blow themselves up in suicide attacks. We know that when leaders are accountable to their people, they are more likely to seek national greatness in the achievements of their citizens, rather than in terror and conquest. So we must stand with democratic leaders and moderate reformers across the broader Middle East. We must give them voice to the hopes of decent men and women who want for their children the same things we want for ours. We must seek stability through a free and just Middle East where the extremists are marginalized by millions of citizens in control of their own destinies.

Today, I'd like to speak directly to the people across the broader Middle East: My country desires peace. Extremists in your midst spread propaganda claiming that the West is engaged in a war against Islam. This propaganda is false, and its purpose is to confuse you and justify acts of terror. We respect Islam, but we will protect our people from those who pervert Islam to sow death and destruction. Our goal is to help you build a more tolerant and hopeful society that honors people of all faiths and promote the peace.

To the people of Iraq: Nearly 12 million of you braved the car bombers and assassins last December to vote in free elections. The world saw you hold up purple ink-stained fingers, and your courage filled us with admiration. You've stood firm in the face of horrendous acts of terror and sectarian violence -- and we will not abandon you in your struggle to build a free nation. America and our coalition partners will continue to stand with the democratic government you elected. We will continue to help you secure the international assistance and investment you need to create jobs and opportunity, working with the United Nations and through the International Compact with Iraq endorsed here in New York yesterday. We will continue to train those of you who stepped forward to fight the enemies of freedom. We will not yield the future of your country to terrorists and extremists. In return, your leaders must rise to the challenges your country is facing, and make difficult choices to bring security and prosperity. Working together, we will help your democracy succeed, so it can become a beacon of hope for millions in the Muslim world.

To the people of Afghanistan: Together, we overthrew the Taliban regime that brought misery into your lives and harbored terrorists who brought death to the citizens of many nations. Since then, we have watched you choose your leaders in free elections and build a democratic government. You can be proud of these achievements. We respect your courage, and your determination to live in peace and freedom. We will continue to stand with you to defend your democratic gains. Today forces from more than 40 countries, including members of the NATO Alliance, are bravely serving side-by-side with you against the extremists who want to bring down the free government you've established. We'll help you defeat these enemies and build a free Afghanistan that will never again oppress you, or be a safe haven for terrorists.

To the people of Lebanon: Last year, you inspired the world when you came out into the streets to demand your independence from Syrian dominance. You drove Syrian forces from your country and you reestablished democracy. Since then, you have been tested by the fighting that began with Hezbollah's unprovoked attacks on Israel. Many of you have seen your homes and communities caught in crossfire. We see your suffering, and the world is helping you to rebuild your country, and helping you deal with the

armed extremists who are undermining your democracy by acting as a state within a state. The United Nations has passed a good resolution that has authorized an international force, led by France and Italy, to help you restore Lebanese sovereignty over Lebanese soil. For many years, Lebanon was a model of democracy and pluralism and openness in the region -- and it will be again.

To the people of Iran: The United States respects you; we respect your country. We admire your rich history, your vibrant culture, and your many contributions to civilization. You deserve an opportunity to determine your own future, an economy that rewards your intelligence and your talents, and a society that allows you to fulfill your tremendous potential. The greatest obstacle to this future is that your rulers have chosen to deny you liberty and to use your nation's resources to fund terrorism, and fuel extremism, and pursue nuclear weapons. The United Nations has passed a clear resolution requiring that the regime in Tehran meet its international obligations. Iran must abandon its nuclear weapons ambitions. Despite what the regime tells you, we have no objection to Iran's pursuit of a truly peaceful nuclear power program. We're working toward a diplomatic solution to this crisis. And as we do, we look to the day when you can live in freedom -- and America and Iran can be good friends and close partners in the cause of peace.

To the people of Syria: Your land is home to a great people with a proud tradition of learning and commerce. Today your rulers have allowed your country to become a crossroad for terrorism. In your midst, Hamas and Hezbollah are working to destabilize the region, and your government is turning your country into a tool of Iran. This is increasing your country's isolation from the world. Your government must choose a better way forward by ending its support for terror, and living in peace with your neighbors, and opening the way to a better life for you and your families.

To the people of Darfur: You have suffered unspeakable violence, and my nation has called these atrocities what they are -- genocide. For the last two years, America joined with the international community to provide emergency food aid and support for an African Union peacekeeping force. Yet your suffering continues. The world must step forward to provide additional humanitarian aid -- and we must strengthen the African Union force that has done good work, but is not strong enough to protect you. The Security Council has approved a resolution that would transform the African Union force into a blue-helmeted force that is larger and more robust. To increase its strength and effectiveness, NATO nations should provide logistics and other support. The regime in Khartoum is stopping the deployment of this force. If the Sudanese government does not approve this peacekeeping force quickly, the United Nations must act. Your lives and the credibility of the United Nations is at stake. So today I'm announcing that I'm naming a Presidential Special Envoy -- former USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios -- to lead America's efforts to resolve the outstanding disputes and help bring peace to your land.

The world must also stand up for peace in the Holy Land. I'm committed to two democratic states -- Israel and Palestine-- living side-by-side in peace and security. I'm committed to a Palestinian state that has territorial integrity and will live peacefully with the Jewish state of Israel. This is the vision set forth in the road map -- and helping the parties reach this goal is one of the great objectives of my presidency. The Palestinian people have suffered from decades of corruption and violence and the daily humiliation of occupation. Israeli citizens have endured brutal acts of terrorism and constant fear of attack since the birth of their nation. Many brave men and women have made the commitment to peace. Yet extremists in the region are stirring up hatred and trying to prevent these moderate voices from prevailing.

This struggle is unfolding in the Palestinian territories. Earlier this year, the Palestinian people voted in a free election. The leaders of Hamas campaigned on a platform of ending corruption and improving the lives of the Palestinian people, and they prevailed. The world is waiting to see whether the Hamas government will follow through on its promises, or pursue an extremist agenda. And the world has sent a clear message to the leaders of Hamas: Serve the interests of the Palestinian people. Abandon terror, recognize Israel's right to exist, honor agreements, and work for peace.

President Abbas is committed to peace, and to his people's aspirations for a state of their own. Prime Minister Olmert is committed to peace, and has said he intends to meet with President Abbas to make real progress on the outstanding issues between them. I believe peace can be achieved, and that a democratic Palestinian state is possible. I hear from leaders in the region who want to help. I've directed

Secretary of State Rice to lead a diplomatic effort to engage moderate leaders across the region, to help the Palestinians reform their security services, and support Israeli and Palestinian leaders in their efforts to come together to resolve their differences. Prime Minister Blair has indicated that his country will work with partners in Europe to help strengthen the governing institutions of the Palestinian administration. We welcome his initiative. Countries like Saudi Arabia and Jordan and Egypt have made clear they're willing to contribute the diplomatic and financial assistance necessary to help these efforts succeed. I'm optimistic that by supporting the forces of democracy and moderation, we can help Israelis and Palestinians build a more hopeful future and achieve the peace in a Holy Land we all want.

Freedom, by its nature, cannot be imposed -- it must be chosen. From Beirut to Baghdad, people are making the choice for freedom. And the nations gathered in this chamber must make a choice, as well: Will we support the moderates and reformers who are working for change across the Middle East -- or will we yield the future to the terrorists and extremists? America has made its choice: We will stand with the moderates and reformers.

Recently a courageous group of Arab and Muslim intellectuals wrote me a letter. In it, they said this: "The shore of reform is the only one on which any lights appear, even though the journey demands courage and patience and perseverance." The United Nations was created to make that journey possible. Together we must support the dreams of good and decent people who are working to transform a troubled region -- and by doing so, we will advance the high ideals on which this institution was founded.

Thank you for your time. God bless.

END 12:35 P.M. EDT

(end transcript)

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Transcript: State Department Spokesman's Daily Briefing  
(Sean McCormack briefs reporters September 18) (4390)

(begin transcript)

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Monday, September 18, 2006  
12:55 p.m. EDT

Briefer: Tom Casey, Deputy Spokesman

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

DAILY PRESS BRIEFING

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2006

(ON THE RECORD UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED)

12:55 p.m. EDT

MR. CASEY: I don't have any statements for you or any announcements to begin with. So, we want to transition into other issues.

QUESTION: President Chirac has raised several points about dealing with Iran. He thinks you all ought to get together and plan an agenda for talking to them. And you know, he says that we should -- we all should stop threatening them with sanctions. And if they agree to suspend enrichment during negotiations, I thought that's what the proposal is. But in any event, there are a few thoughts he expressed and I wondered if you've had a chance to see it and can you talk about if it is time to compose an agenda to deal with Iran?

MR. CASEY: Well, Barry, first of all, I didn't see his comments, though I've certainly seen some press reporting on them. And my understanding is that he reiterated what is expressed in Resolution 1696 which is what we all want to see happen, which is Iran to suspend its uranium enrichment activities. And at which point have us then begin to have negotiations with Iran based on the proposals put forward by the P-5+1.

Obviously that's the preferred track for everyone. Unfortunately, as you know, Iran has not made any steps in that direction. It continues to enrich uranium. It has not given any indication that it has changed its views regarding a suspension. And so we continue to have discussions among both the P-5+1 as well as more broadly with the Security Council about next steps in this process.

And as you know, the resolution pretty clearly called for those next steps to be a resolution on sanctions in the UN Security Council. But again, I'd view his comments largely as in keeping with where all the rest of us are. We certainly would like to see Iran make a choice that would not only be in the interest of the P-5+1, not only would have it meet its requirements to the international community, but would in fact be in the best interests of the Iranian people.

QUESTION: Yesterday the United States Embassy to South Korea was quoted to have mentioned the United States can come to the bilateral talks provided North Korea could return to the six-party talks. Do you have anything on that?

MR. CASEY: Well, I certainly haven't seen anything that Sandy might have said, but from your description of it -- as Chris Hill has said repeatedly and as we have said repeatedly -- we are happy to meet with the North Koreans in the context of the six-party talks. That's been done by the United States in every round of six-party talks held and that continues to be our position. But the most important thing is that North Korea has to make that decision. They have to come back to the talks to work on implementing the September 19th agreement which is something that again would provide benefits for everyone involved, for the international community as a whole and for North Korea as well.

Kirit.

QUESTION: On Darfur, actually. I believe the Sudanese Government has said that it would agree to extend the AU mandate, also that it would probably welcome an AU-plus force with Western aid for helicopters and technological support. Can you tell us anything about that, that the U.S. is --

MR. CASEY: Well, I haven't seen the comments. But again, what we want to see happen and what's required in the UN Security Council resolution on Sudan is that we move first to strengthen the AU force that is there and that we ultimately move forward with transitioning that to a UN peacekeeping force. That's something we believe has to happen as quickly as possible. And I think you've heard both from the President last week as well as from the Secretary about our view that that needs to happen and happen as soon as possible. That's what we're working for at the UN. It is what we have expressed to the Government of Sudan and it is what we have encouraged other governments to make the case to them as well.

QUESTION: But in the interim, would the U.S. accept an extended mandate for the AU force and provide support on the technological side for an AU-plus force?

MR. CASEY: Well, we've always said that what we need to do as the transition moves forward is strengthen the AU force. And again, the AU force is going to be the backbone of the UN-mandated force as well. So certainly we want to see those troops that are there continue to do their job. We want to see them strengthened and supported to the best extent possible. And we, though, therefore believe it is also important to transition as quickly as possible over to a UN force. And again, that's what's required in the Security Council resolution.

QUESTION: Just one last thing. I believe that President Bashir said quite clearly and forcefully the other day that he would never accept a UN force. Do you have any comment on that?

MR. CASEY: Again, the Security Council has made its views clear. We've made our views clear. We think it's not only appropriate but incredibly vital for Sudan and for its own people as it tries to arrange for a lasting peace in that country that we move ahead with implementing the Darfur Peace Agreement. And implementing the Darfur Peace Agreement is going to require the support of this UN-mandated force. It's something that the Sudanese Government accepted when they signed on to that agreement and we're looking for them to honor that commitment.

Charlie.

QUESTION: Tom, just to pursue it. If President Bashir says he won't accept a UN force, but will accept an enhanced AU force, and you say that it's always been our policy that as the transition moves forward, what if there isn't going to be a transition? And you know, is the U.S. in favor of the international community going in with the UN force against President Bashir's government's wishes?

MR. CASEY: Well, again, I think you've heard from Jendayi Frazier and from Kristen Silverberg, I think as recently as Friday on that subject. The resolution requests but does not require Sudanese Government cooperation with the transition and with implementing the UN force. Obviously it is something we want to have. We think it's important to have that force not only be acquiesced to, but welcomed by the Sudanese Government again because it is part of the long-term solution to the violence and the problems in Darfur. Again in terms of how we make the transition and how the military specifics of that goes, I'll leave that to the UN peacekeeping office and the other military planners involved. But clearly, we need to strengthen the existing AU force as we move forward in the transition.

QUESTION: So you said there will be a U.N. force with or without Sudanese support.

MR. CASEY: We fully expect that there will be a peacekeeping force in Sudan. The resolution calls for that force to be blue-helmeted, to be under a UN mandate, and that's what we expect to see happen.

Let's go over here.

QUESTION: Can you have any comment on reports that the leaders of India and Pakistan agreed to talks in New Delhi to discuss outstanding issues such as Kashmir?

MR. CASEY: I don't. I haven't seen those reports. Certainly as we've said, we welcome discussions between the two parties on issues of mutual concern. We have a good and important relationship with India. We have a good and important relationship with Pakistan. And we certainly welcome any efforts on the parts of leaders of both those countries to engage with one another and discuss any outstanding concerns.

Let's go to Mr. Lambros.

QUESTION: Yes, on the Pope. Despite several apologies, Pope Benedict continues to face threats to his personal life and safety from Islamic extremists around the world. In November, the Pope will visit officially Turkey where the Prime Minister Recep Erdogan yesterday has not accepted the Pope's apology and the Minister of Religious Affairs is still publicly criticizing the (inaudible) Turkey. Given, Mr. Casey, past violence by extremists against the Ecumenical Patriarch, head of Constantinople in Istanbul, will the U.S. Government ask its NATO ally, namely Turkey, to take protective measures for the Ecumenical Patriarch of Constantinople during the Pope's visit there?

MR. CASEY: Well, Mr. Lambros, obviously what we want to see is that all religious groups act with tolerance of one another. You saw Ambassador Hanford here on Friday when he talked about and rolled out our annual report on International Religious Freedom. And as he expressed to you then, one of the most important values for us in the United States is religious tolerance and religious freedom. It's a fundamental value. It's a fundamental issue that is right up there with any other human right or any other human value -- the freedom to be able to worship as one chooses.

Certainly we understand that individuals will have concerns about remarks made by all kinds of people. But the most important thing is that in our actions, both from the United States' part as well for many of our friends overseas, that what we try and do is develop a culture of tolerance, develop dialogue and that we show respect for one another's religion. As Ambassador Hanford told you on Friday, we of course, continue to be engaged with the Government of Turkey on issues related the Ecumenical Patriarch. I believe that's actually covered in some of the sections of the report on Turkey and I'd really just refer you again back to his comments and what's in the report on that issue.

QUESTION: One more (inaudible.)

MR. CASEY: Can we -- hold on, one second, Mr. Lambros.

QUESTION: A follow-up on that one.

MR. CASEY: Yes.

QUESTION: I mean, do you think -- do you want to call on groups or individuals that are making threats against the Pope to cease and desist? Do you think that the Pope should himself be -- come up with an apology or a statement that would more satisfy some of his critics?

MR. CASEY: Well, Arshad, first of all, I think I'll let the Vatican speak for the pope. And I'm probably not in a good position to be giving advice to the leader of any major religion. So all I would say simply is obviously when I talk about the need for there to be a culture of tolerance and a culture of respect for everyone's religion, obviously respect for religion and religious tolerance does not see any room for threats or for violence or for any kinds of actions, whether that's against mosques, churches, synagogues, temples or any other kind of religious establishment.

Part of what we have stood for in the United States, part of what the United States was founded upon was in the notion of tolerance for different religious views and tolerance for people's right to worship as they see fit or not to worship at all as they see fit. Clearly anyone responding to words with calls for violence or with actual violence itself are acting outside the scope of anything we support.

QUESTION: Follow up.

MR. CASEY: Yeah, Samir.

QUESTION: What's your reaction to the criticism -- after the publishing of the International Religion Report -- that the State Department was soft on Saudi Arabia?

MR. CASEY: Well, I think Ambassador Hanford talked with you a little bit about that. We've had an extensive dialogue with Saudi Arabia on religious freedom issues. Part of an agreement that Ambassador Hanford helped work out earlier this year included dealing with the many concerns that we had about textbooks that had been produced not only for use in Saudi Arabia but also that had been disseminated to other parts of the world, including here in the United States. So I think we've had a very frank and honest dialogue with the Government of Saudi Arabia about religious freedom issues. I think the report itself conveys a very accurate description of how we view the situation there.

And this is certainly an issue that we will continue to be discussing with the government there. But I think the report and I think our policies accurately reflect our concerns about them.

Yes, Barry.

QUESTION: An AP photographer, Iraqi by nationality, has been detained without charges. And the AP is asking that the charges be placed against him or he be released. Of course you've got many thousands of people in that position. Do you know anything about whether -- do you have a response to whether there's -- whether he should be tried or released? Can he be just held forever?

MR. CASEY: Well, Barry, my understanding is that he is being held by Coalition authorities in Iraq. I'd frankly refer you to them or to the Pentagon for the specifics on that since they're the agency involved. Obviously though, when the Coalition authorities -- when the Coalition military authorities in Iraq detain individuals, they do so because they believe they represent a threat to security, either because they've been actively engaged in terrorist activities or actively engaged in hostilities against the Coalition or because they have suspensions of other kinds of activities.

In the case of this individual, I honestly don't know any of the specifics. But I'd refer you to them as to what the nature of the reasons for his detention is and what the possibilities are for some change in his status.

QUESTION: So in this case you really don't know if he's a victim of guilt by association or suspicion by association. Of course, as a photographer he's in, you know, contact with all sorts of people. And I don't know if that raised suspicions.

MR. CASEY: Well, Barry, I'd certainly -- we respect the tough job that your colleagues have in Iraq. I appreciate the fact that many of them put their lives on the line to be able to report and to be able to try and inform the American public and publics overseas as well about what's going on in that country. In terms of the specifics of this individual's case and the reasons for his detention as well as the other circumstances surrounding it, I just simply don't have any information on it. And I'd have to refer you over to DOD.

Let's go, Mr. Lambros, I promised I'd get back to you.

QUESTION: Mr. Casey, on Cyprus. Do you -- tomorrow's meeting in New York City between the President of the Republic of Cyprus, Tassos Papadopoulos, and the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, could you please clarify the U.S. position vis-à-vis to the Annan plan? Otherwise it's still on the table of negotiations as it was specifically by DAS Matt Bryza during his last special briefing at the Foreign Press Center?

MR. CASEY: Well, Mr. Lambros, whatever Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Matt Bryza said, I'm sure is correct and fully reflects U.S. policy towards the region. But just to clarify, U.S. policy hasn't changed. We continue to seek a -- wish to see a solution to the situation on Cyprus. We wish to see that be done in accordance with a result that would be acceptable to both communities. That's where it's been and that's where I'd leave it. We certainly welcome discussions by the Secretary General with all communities in Cyprus. Again, we'd like to see this issue resolved sooner rather than later.

QUESTION: On PKK, on PKK.

MR. CASEY: All right. One on PKK.

QUESTION: On PKK. I'm wondering if your special envoy on the PKK issue, General Joseph Ralston, who met yesterday with Massoud Barzani in Iraq, is going to discuss the religious, cultural, political and other rights of the Kurdish minorities southeast of Turkey which number about 15 millions. And may we have a readout, Mr. Casey, about his efforts so far to find a solution on the PKK issue?

MR. CASEY: Well, first of all, what I expect General Ralston to be doing in all his meetings is what he's done in his meetings with Turkish officials, which is talk about how we can all work together -- Iraqis, Americans and Turks to be able to deal with the threat represented by the PKK. As you know, the United States considers the PKK to be a terrorist organization. We do not wish the PKK to be able to operate from any region, whether that's northern Iraq or elsewhere. We recognize that there are concerns on the part of the Turkish Government as well as concerns on the part of the Iraqi Government about these activities. We certainly share them. And what we're all doing and what General Ralston is doing in all of his meetings is talking in this initial round of consultations about how we can all work more closely together to deal with this very serious problem.

Kirit.

QUESTION: A quick question about some comments by Foreign Minister Livni this morning regarding her meeting last week with Secretary Rice. She apparently said that she had hoped for more to come out of the meeting. She said that they -- she and the Secretary share the same objectives but that the meeting was a bit disappointing. And I was just wondering if you -- if Secretary Rice shared this disappointment about the productivity of her meeting last week?

MR. CASEY: I'd say that what Secretary Rice thought about the meeting she shared with you guys right after it. Certainly we have a very important and strong relationship with Israel. I think they had a good meeting here the other week. They met again today, I believe, yes, a little earlier today up in New York. This is part of our continuing conversation both about how we go about achieving the ultimate goal of the President's two state solution, as well as talking about issues related to the implementation of Resolution 1701 on Lebanon.

So I think they've had a good meeting here last week. I'm sure they had a good meeting today as well and I expect they'll continue to do so.

QUESTION: The Israeli corporal who was kidnapped, there have been any reports that maybe an exchange -- not exchange -- but the release of some 800 Palestinians might precipitate his release. Do you have anything? Do you expect him to be released or do you have any information you want to share with us?

MR. CASEY: Barry, I don't have any particular information related to that case. Obviously, as we've said all along and as is called for in Resolution 1701, we believe that he should be released immediately and unconditionally by those people that are holding him.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. CASEY: I think we've got a couple more. Let's go over here.

QUESTION: Yes, on Mexico. I'm wondering if you have a comment on the latest announcement by Mr. Lopez Obrador that he will be forming a parallel government. And also do you worry that the fact that the opposition, you know, maintain his insistence that there was -- the election was fraudulent. That will keep in some way the cloud of legitimacy over the Calderon administration, which seems to be (inaudible) also by the comments of President Chavez of Venezuela, who in the week -- two days ago say that he's going to be rethinking his relationship with the new Government of Mexico.

MR. CASEY: Well, obviously these are all issues that are for the Mexican people to decide and look at. What I will say is what we've said previously: We have great respect for Mexico's democratic institutions. We respect the work and the decision done by the Electoral Tribunal. We look forward to working with the administration of President-elect Calderon on the huge array of issues that are before the United States and Mexico. As to how the internal politics of Mexico works out and what the ultimate decisions of various political players are in that system, that's obviously for Mexico to decide.

Let's go back here. This gentleman has been waiting a long time.

QUESTION: Yes, Mr. Casey. I want to go back to the drug report and I was wondering if you could give us a Spanish language reply if possible. The question is: With Venezuela, how does this announcement fall into the whole -- these diplomatic tensions between both countries, a meeting Mr. Chavez and Mr. Ahmadi-Nejad? And with Bolivia, do you sense that Bolivia is willing or is there an indication that they're willing to work under this framework that is being spelled out today?

MR. CASEY: Well, if I give you a reply in Spanish, Julie will hit me, so I don't want to do that. But we'll work on that for you later. In terms of our broader relationship with Venezuela, obviously, the narcotics issue is a very important part of our relationship. But the decisions made this year reflect exactly where we were last year as well which is unfortunately an inability to work out a cooperative arrangement with the Government of Venezuela on some of the key issues, including an agreement with the DEA as we've been working towards.

In terms of how we place it, in the broader relationship with Venezuela, well, obviously this is an important bilateral concern. But our other issues concerning Venezuela are separate from this and I wouldn't try and lump either of the two together. Certainly, we've expressed our concerns about the internal

development of democracy in Venezuela and some of the problems that we see there. But this decision is not related to those concerns. They are separate issues even though they are both important to us.

In terms of Bolivia, again I think as you heard a little earlier, the Bolivian Government will be looking at this issue with us. We do think that we've got a good basis for cooperation on the broad range of our issues with Bolivia. And we are looking forward to moving ahead with them on it. Clearly, this is an area where we've expressed some concerns. We've done so both privately and publicly. But I think there's goodwill on both sides to move forward with advancing our relationship.

Joel.

QUESTION: Prior to the UN session this week, there was the Conference of Non-Aligned Nations held in Cuba. And as you've just mentioned, Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, is the government or the presidency of Venezuela so out of control that we may even yet further downgrade our relations with Venezuela? And do you think that threat with roughly 50 countries in attendance -- is that a precursor or a marker of instability of these countries coming to the UN to further erode the reform type measures that we're seeking there?

MR. CASEY: Well, first of all, I haven't seen the actual communiqué or the conclusions that were released by the NAM. Obviously the NAM was created in a very different time in history and for purposes that may or may not have much relevance anymore. In terms of President Chavez, again, I think President Chavez makes his views known pretty clearly. We've made ours known with respect to our concerns about the situation in terms of development of democracy in Venezuela. We've talked about our concerns on the narcotics front today and certainly I expect we will in the future, but I don't have anything in particular to add to it.

Kirit.

QUESTION: Just a follow-up. I want to ask you if you could tell us if President Ahmadi-Nejad's visa had been issued and if his -- anybody in his entourage had those denied?

MR. CASEY: My understanding is that his visa has been issued. I'm not exactly sure what his speaking schedule is at the UN. You'd have to check with UN officials on that or with Iranian Government officials. To the best of my knowledge, no one in his party has had their visa denied. I do understand there were some late applications that were put in as recently as today. And clearly we will have to work through those. There is a procedure that we have to go through to comply with U.S. law in terms of approving visas for Iranians as well for nationals of other countries with which we don't have diplomatic relations. But again, I think everything's moving forward in accordance with our obligations under the Headquarters Agreement.

QUESTION: Thank you.

MR. CASEY: We have one last one. Mr. Lambros.

QUESTION: On Greece, Mr. Casey, it was announced officially in Athens that Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is going to meet the Greek Foreign Minister Dora Bakoyannis September 27th, here at the State Department. May we know the reason of the meeting and if you could say something about their agenda?

MR. CASEY: If I had her schedule for next week, Mr. Lambros, I might be able to tell you. Certainly we enjoy a very strong and substantial relationship with Greece. I'm sure that whenever the next opportunity is for them to meet, that the Secretary looks forward to having an opportunity to discuss a wide variety of both bilateral and regional issues with her.

Thanks, everyone.

(The briefing was concluded at 1:20 p.m.)

(end transcript)

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Transcript: State Briefing on Designation of Major Drug-Producing Countries  
("Majors List" includes same 20 countries as last year) (3140)

(begin transcript)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
Office of the Spokesman  
September 18, 2006

#### ON-THE-RECORD BRIEFING

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Christy McCampbell

International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs  
On the President's Determination on National Drug Producing and  
Trafficking Countries

September 18, 2006  
Washington, DC

(12:33 EDT)

MR. CASEY: Good afternoon, everybody. Welcome to the start of another week here at the State Department. As I think most of you know, the decisions on the Majors List -- the list of those countries that are major suppliers, producers, transporters of narcotics was released by the White House today. Before we go into the regular part of our briefing, I'd like to provide you an opportunity to hear from Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs Christy McCampbell about that decision and to provide you with a little bit more of the details of some of the thinking behind it.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Well, good morning. I'm Christy McCampbell and I am the Deputy Assistant Secretary for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. I'm here to talk with you a little bit this morning about the President's 2007 designation of the Majors List of illegal drug-transit and drug-producing countries.

Just a little bit on my background. I'm a career, 30-year law enforcement officer, narcotic enforcement specifically, and headed up for the state of California drug enforcement in that state. So I've been working this issue for many, many years.

Each year at this time the President is required under the Foreign Relations Authorization Act to notify Congress of countries that are considered either illegal transit countries or drug-producing countries. And this results in what is known as the Majors List. To be designated on the Majors List does not necessarily mean that the country is supporting drug trafficking or lacking in counter-narcotics efforts. The designation is simply -- or can come from a combination of geographical, commercial or other economic factors that allow drugs to transit or to be illegally produced.

On the other hand, being on the Majors List can also signify a country's lack of interest or blatant refusal to adhere to the obligations of counter-narcotic conventions and international agreements. In that case a



country will be determined to have "failed demonstrably" and be subject to sanctions. A country can also be determined to have "failed demonstrably" but be given a waiver against sanctions if there is a vital national interest in continuing assistance.

This year the countries on the Majors List are the same as last year. They are: Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Venezuela. That's 20 countries.

The President has determined that two countries, Burma and Venezuela, failed demonstrably during the previous 12 months to make substantial efforts to adhere to their obligations. Venezuela has been given a waiver to possible sanctions under U.S. law because support for the programs to aid Venezuela's democratic institutions and community development projects is vital to the national interests of the United States. The determination on Venezuela is based on a variety of poor performance indicators, including a lack of cooperation with neighboring countries, soaring drug transshipments, plummeting seizures, failure to prosecute corrupt officials and the indeterminate status of our DEA presence in the country.

For Burma, the President's Statement of Justification for the world's second largest producer of opium and a major trafficker of meth-type stimulants, notes that the country has not taken decisive action against drug gangs and its actions against methamphetamine are unsatisfactory. Burma's performance is also lackluster in the areas of demand reduction, interdiction, anti-money laundering and combating corruption.

Countries singled out for specific comment in the President's determination include a number of countries: Afghanistan, Bolivia, Canada, Ecuador, Haiti, and North Korea; although Canada and North Korea are not on the Majors List.

For Afghanistan the Administration recognizes that President Karzai has strongly attacked narco-trafficking as the greatest threat to Afghanistan. But we are, of course, still concerned that failure to act decisively now will undermine Afghanistan's security, democratic processes and international support.

Bolivia is the world's third largest producer of cocaine and since October of 2005, it has undertaken policies that have allowed the expansion of coca cultivation and slowed the pace of eradication until just recently. Bolivia's policy of "zero cocaine, but not zero coca," has focused on interdiction to the near exclusion of eradication and alternative development. Over the next six months, the U.S. is encouraging this country to eradicate at least 5,000 hectares of illegal coca, establish tight controls on the sale of licit coca leaf for traditional use and strengthen controls on chemicals used to make cocaine.

We are also concerned about Bolivia's actions to undermine specific provisions in UN counter-narcotics conventions relating to the coca leaf. Now I want to be specific in that the President wants very much Bolivia to have every opportunity to collaborate bilaterally and in the region to reduce the availability of cocaine and the raw materials necessary for cocaine trafficking.

President Morales frequently notes that his goal is to reduce Bolivia's cocaine production to zero. The United States shares that objective, but does have serious, very serious concerns about Bolivia's ability to achieve that. President Morales has been in office for just nine months. So it was felt that it would be premature to reach any conclusion about Bolivian efforts to comply with their counter-drug obligations at this time. The United States will continue to offer counter-drug assistance to Bolivia and we will review the benchmarks in six months time.

In Canada, the U.S. is especially pleased with their continued work to curb diversion of chemicals and to combat methamphetamine production. The U.S. however is still concerned about large-scale "indoor" marijuana planting operations in Canada. In Ecuador increased flow of cocaine destined for the U.S. makes our cooperation on maritime operational procedures especially important.

And in the case of Haiti, we encourage the new government to strengthen law enforcement reforms to bring drug trafficking and crime under control. In Nigeria, as in previous years, we are concerned about official corruption, although the country has taken substantive steps to combat this corrosive problem.

With respect to North Korea, we have made it clear that stopping state directed criminal activity is a necessary prerequisite to accepted entry into the international community.

I would like to take a moment to say a few words about drug control progress in Colombia. This Andean country's strong commitment against illegal drugs and the terrorist-drug connection has produced record positive results, especially in terms of eradication, interdiction and extradition of suspected major traffickers in the United States and the U.S. does laud their efforts and their partnership.

On a final note, I'd just like to say that Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act passed by Congress this year enhances current measures to address the growing concerns about meth-type drugs. It would also strengthen our ability to work with international partners, to act against this ravaging drug which is affecting countries all over the world. In March of next year, the Administration will identify the top five exporters of meth precursor chemicals and also the top five importers with the interest -- highest rates of diversion for illegal use.

As you know, we're all aware that illegal drugs and transnational organized crime threatens us all -- it takes a global effort to combat this problem. And combining eradication with interdiction, alternative development, criminal justice modernization, anti-corruption and demand reduction programs is essential to tackle these common threats to our well-being. So with that, I'm happy to try to answer any questions for you.

QUESTION: One question on the mechanics. If a country is deemed to have failed demonstrably and is not granted a national interest waiver what are the sanctions? Am I correct in understanding that that mandates the cutting off of all U.S. aid to other than counter-narcotics aid or are the sanctions more --

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Well, humanitarian aid as well. But the President has the option to look at how to sanction a country and can make a determination. But generally, they can -- the President can deny sales or financing. They can deny the provision of agricultural commodities. They can deny financing under the Export-Import Bank Act, withhold most assistance with the exception generally of specified humanitarian and counter-narcotics assistance and also vote against proposed loans from six multilateral development banks.

QUESTION: But all of that is discretionary or is that mandatory? In other words, that unless he grants or she grants a waiver, that the President would have to withhold all aid except the humanitarian and the counternarcotics.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: I believe that there is some discretion to it.

QUESTION: Okay. Is there a way that we could get maybe afterwards the exact language on that?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Sure.

QUESTION: Thank you.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Absolutely. Yes.

QUESTION: Madame Secretary, did you find anything on laundering money corruption, threat of narcotics in Albania and more specifically in Kosovo, since both places have a long, long (inaudible)?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: They do and yet they're not on the list of majors at this time.

QUESTION: Yes, and one more question. And where Turkey stands on this crucial list?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: No, it's not. It's not on the list.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) if you have anything to say about this under the designated countries, but I'm saying as an area, you are interested and you notice anything to this effect?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: I do not at this time.

QUESTION: Bolivia's Vice President Garcia, who was here last week talking to Secretary Patterson, I believe and he was over at the White House. Surely he knows about your concerns. Did he give you any assurances that Bolivia will try harder in the future?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: He did indicate that they certainly want to work with the United States and we did have a cordial meeting with the Vice President. We expressed our concerns. He listened to it and there was not any kind of meeting of the minds at this meeting. That was just this morning that the Vice President, and actually through the ambassador here, learned of what our five benchmarks are for them to meet.

QUESTION: From time to time, we have been hearing about the excellent cooperation between Mexico and U.S. in the war against drugs. Nevertheless, the country appears again, as one of the major transit points in the hemisphere, especially for coca and marijuana. And besides that we hear a couple of days ago in the Senate the fear that this new trend of chemical drugs is taken. So I mean, could you explain why, you know, at the same time Mexico appears to be doing good in the war against drugs, you know, the country is still one of the major transit points?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Well, I just recently visited Mexico City. And part of our -- the purpose of our trip to go to Mexico was to bring a greater awareness to the problems that we're having with methamphetamine. Having worked in California, they are close to the southwest border, we did have a very cooperative working relationship with Mexico and Mexican officials and they were concerned about our issues, particularly on meth at this time is what we were talking about. We are working with them to come up with better precursor controls and trying to work on subjects that -- where we can monitor chemicals coming into Mexico and monitor the -- whether it's already produced methamphetamine or the chemicals going back out of California. We were relatively successful at the southwest border there and would have to say in California keeping the drugs -- getting the drugs out of California, which had been at one time a major producer of methamphetamine. Because of precursor controls, we were able to move some of it out of California. Unfortunately, a lot of it went back to Mexico. But we are working with Mexico and under the Fox administration he has been very cooperative and open to any of our suggestions on what we can do better about the drug problem.

QUESTION: But may -- if I follow up. I mean the fact that we have seen reports of increasing violence in some areas of the country, that doesn't mean to you that in some way that the drug problem is getting out of hand of the Mexican Government? I mean, they can certainly not control the flow of drugs from Mexico toward the U.S. and also there seems to do no -- any effect on the operation of these criminal organizations.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Well, I would have to answer -- I mean, every country almost in the world, including the United States, is having a terrible problem with drugs. And we have for quite a few years. I think the point is some countries don't seem to be too worried about it and other countries, Mexico being one, certainly indicates that they are concerned about it and we've had many, many meetings with Mexico. They come here and we've gone down there to discuss these problems. If there was very specific answers to how to do this and keep drugs out of all of our countries, I think we'd all be drug free. But it's a matter of working cooperatively with each country, including Mexico.

Yes.

QUESTION: I just -- I have a clarification question. I understand that back in 2002 or fiscal year 2003, this Majors List was consolidated into the certification process. So my question is: Is this what used to be called the Annual Certification Report? And if so, those countries that are on the list have been very vocal about saying, well, the U.S. also needs to do its part in reducing consumption in the U.S., which is triggering the offer -- you know the demanding offer question here. So can you address that?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Sure. Well, first of all, yes, this has been in the past called the certification or decertification list. I think it's important that that almost makes it sound kind of like it's a judgment, or judgmental, and we don't want it to be that way. It is not meant to be that way. This is why we've changed wording to "failed demonstrably," because nobody is sitting in judgment. We are actually trying to work together and figure out how we can solve these problems.

QUESTION: And what about the consumption issue?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: I would have to say on the consumption issue, we spend huge amounts of money in this country as well as other countries on demand reduction. It is a major part of our drug strategy.

MR. CASEY: We have time for a couple more. Arshad, I know you had one more and then we'll go to Scott in the back.

QUESTION: A quick one. Your comments on Afghanistan, although you note some of the efforts by President Karzai, you also say -- or the President says in his memo that the government at all levels must be held accountable. Are you, by that at all levels, you're clearly including Karzai. You feel that he has not done enough.

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: I think the numbers, and we've had increased drugs in that country obviously. I think what we are saying is Karzai is certainly doing everything that we can see to better this problem -- to make this problem less. It's early in his administration and we know that there needs to be great improvement and we know also that we absolutely must address corruption throughout the government. And so once we can get corruption addressed a little bit better, I think then we can be -- have more success in the drug issue.

QUESTION: So he needs to do a little more?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Well, we all need to do more on the drug issue.

MR. CASEY: Let's go to the back here.

QUESTION: Thank you. On Colombia, you just mentioned and you applaud Colombia's efforts to reduce crops and cultivation of cocaine. What do (inaudible) have -- because we see press reports every day saying that Colombia has the same amount that it started when Plan Colombia started five years ago? What kind of support do you have for that -- applaud Colombia's efforts?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Actually there were numbers that came out that said that they'd found that more coca was growing in the country. That's a little bit of a misnomer because larger areas were reviewed than had been in the past. And so the way that we're looking at the country changed a bit. And so the areas that we had traditionally been eradicating, those numbers were down. But the larger areas in the country did increase and so we did find more coca.

MR. CASEY: Okay. Let's just take one more - in the back.

QUESTION: I'm sorry, I'm not fully understanding the situation with Venezuela. It sounded like there were ways in which they're falling short. But I -- but then you said they had been given a possible waiver and I don't quite understand. I can't reconcile those two. Can you help me?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: They have been given a waiver. They've been found to fail demonstrably in their efforts. But that is with a waiver, which means that's an exception and that we will -- the United States, the President will continue to provide certain funding for them. And they've -- we've had to terminate -- they've had to terminate a number of our programs there. There's a prosecution task force that they terminated. There's a cargo inspection facility that they did terminate.

But the President believes in the interest of the United States it will be best to try to work with them and to continue funding certain of their programs.

QUESTION: (Inaudible) cooperating again on counternarcotics?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Well, it hasn't been zero cooperation in that they do some eradication and they do some interdiction. But their sharing of that information and letting us know is certainly less than upfront.

QUESTION: But no signs they want to start working again directly with the DEA following their decision to terminate that?

DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY MCCAMPBELL: Well, that -- they have not signed the DEA agreement yet and we've been trying and trying to make that happen and had plenty of negotiations and it just hasn't occurred yet.

QUESTION: Thank you.

(end transcript)

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